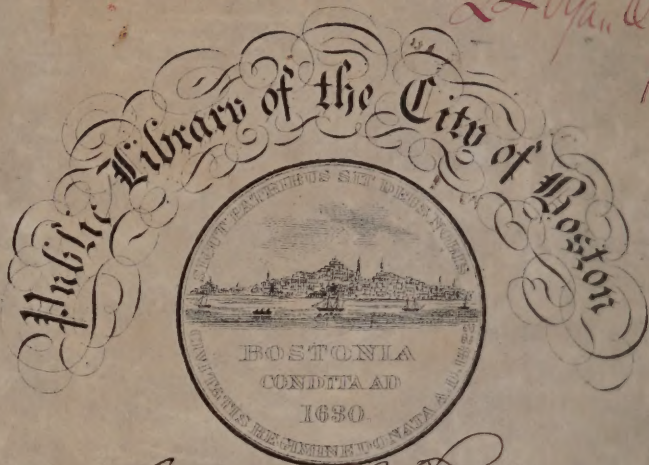




A PASTORAL POEM

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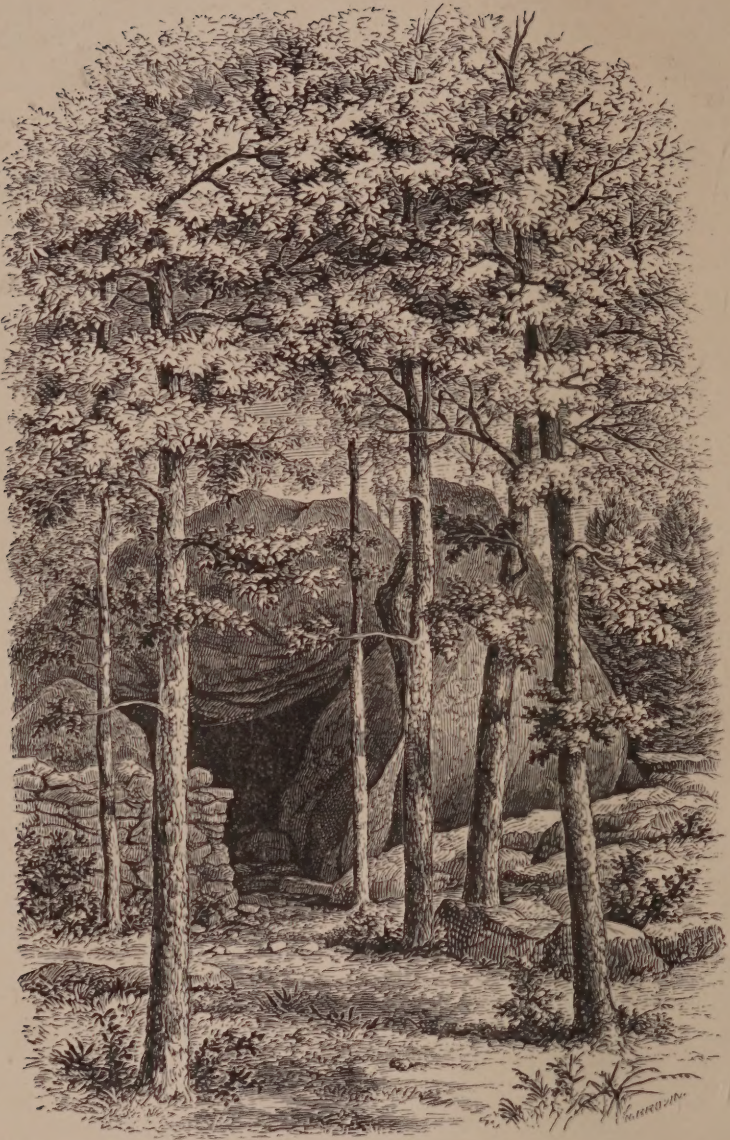
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By George H. Fullerton
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THE STONE HOUSE.

RUTH:

A PASTORAL POEM.


BY

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DEDICATION.



TO

W. WEBBER, ARTIST,

DO I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

IN the development of Ruth's character, I have endeavored to show the healthful influence which Nature always exerts over those who love her.

If, in girlhood, Ruth ever seems to be a hoyden, my readers must remember that she was a country-girl, without any restraint from society.

Rocks, trees, and flowers were her dearest companions; and she almost believed that they were possessed of souls, so truly and tenderly did they seem to speak to her.

It was music that she heard in the sough-

ing of the pines ; and all the trees together were sometimes instruments in Nature's hands, wherewith she played the grandest symphony.

When love had warmed her heart, and had aroused all passion in her strong, womanly being, and afterwards death had taken away the object of her affection, so that her life was sad and dreary, she turned instinctively to Nature, who had ever proved a friend to her.

The cold winter-months gave little comfort, it is true : but sympathy was not wanting then ; and when spring came, and summer, and fall, she was glad in that sympathy, and her heart was led into submission to the divine will ; so that her life became more beautiful because of the great sorrow that had come upon her.

G. H. F.

RUTH.



RUTH:
A PASTORAL POEM.

INTRODUCTION.

By forest woods encompassed round,
Wherein the night-birds' chantings sound;
By winding river, cleft in twain,
Where minnows thick like drops of rain,
And speckled trout of pleasing size,
With perch and pickerel, feast our eyes;
By comely dwellings, fertile farms,
By lofty elms with graceful charms,
And spreading oaks and orchards fine,

Beneath whose shade the well-fed kine
At heat of noon find welcome rest,
And kindred beauties brightly blest,—
There lies a peaceful neighborhood,
Which hath the storms of time withstood.

Ere setting suns their golden glow
On feathery, waiting clouds bestow,
With mingled hues of beauteous green,
Of red and purple-tinted sheen,
There fall long shadows, till the stream
And westward fields and woodlands seem
With evening glamor overspread,
Which o'er all life such influence shed
As twilight yields on meadows fair
When quiet grows the changing air;
When crickets chirp, and frogs they peep,
And beasts repair for nightly sleep.

From Stone-house Hill these shadows fall,—
A hill with rocks and tower tall.
By well-worn paths 'mong rocks and trees,
At evening's hush or morning's breeze;
'Mid winter's cold or summer's heat,
Or when the yielding seasons meet;
In Indian house with grove beside,
Or in the woodland spreading wide;
On towering rock, in deep ravine,
Or where the grape-vine hangs between;
In meadows bright with spring-time flowers,
Whereon the sun and genial showers
Have sweetly fallen unforbid;
Or in the brook by alders hid,—
There roams, as ever suits her will,
The pretty maid of Stone-house Hill.

RUTH.

G I R L H O O D.

GIRL of the wood, maid of the hill,
Singing her songs by rippling rill ;
Roaming ever through wood and wold,
Happy, thoughtful, modest, and bold ;
The forest-paths her great delight,
O'er hill at morn, and vale at night ;
Rocks, trees, and flowers her greatest joy ;
While happy thoughts her mind employ ;
Walking, running, climbing, springing ;
From the highest birch-trees swinging ;
Laughing, whistling, humming, singing,

Till the air with joy is ringing ;
Features fair, her dark eyes glowing,
Dark brown hair in beauty flowing ;
Over all, health's glow bestowing
Beauty rare, to pure air owing.

This was the maid, and Ruth her name,
In whom, perchance, was much to blame,
But more to praise ; much to admire
In active thought and pure desire.
Upon the rocky hill, whose name
Is sacred held to local fame,
There quaintly lie, 'mid oak and pine,
Three mighty rocks, which close combine,
And form a structure high and wide,
On which the scars of time abide.
Herein may rest on couch of stone,
'Mong Nature's children, seated lone,

• Whoe'er may chance at noontide heat
To find this cool and calm retreat.
From northern side the breezes come ;
And through its portal sounds the hum
Of pine-tree murmurings far and near,—
The tones to rural ears so dear.
Wild roses in a crevice grow,
And on the air their sweets bestow ;
While from the northern oak-tree grove
The warbling birds descant of love ;
And from this house the rocks among
Come reveries of an unknown tongue,—
Of stalwart forms in savage pride,
Who roamed the fields and forests wide ;
Who, fierce and warlike, sought their prey
Athwart the lands at dawn of day ;
Who made at night their humble cot
Upon this wild, romantic spot.

But now these braves, who, in defence,
Fought to sustain their innate sense
Of liberty and just regard,
In other lands have their reward.
Their wigwams now are lined with gold;
Congenial scenes their eyes behold;
Their squaws are joyful all the day,
As safe their own papposes play.
No more the pale-face shall invade,
Or drive to some unfriendly shade;
For Manitou esteems his child
Of mountain heights and forests wild
No less than him whose church is built
Of sculptured stone inlaid with gilt.

'Tis early morn, and chirping May,
So blithely bold, is born to-day.
But hearken we! 'Tis joy to hear
The shout of voices coming near.

And, as they hasten, list the sound
Of ringing footsteps on the ground !
Up winding paths the maidens run,—
Ere their gallants have well begun
The steeping stairway to ascend,—
And singing with their shouting blend.
Each happy face is flushed with health,
As, garnering the Spring's bright wealth,
They run and jump with sounding glee,
Filling the groves with melody.
The beauteous flowers of early spring
To this retreat they loitering bring,
And on the rocky table near
Adorn their welcome, waiting cheer.
Here is no priest his prayer to raise :
So let the birds sing loud their praise,
And sweetly blend exuberant notes
With prayerful music from their throats ;
While hungry youths and maidens then

With thankful hearts shall say, "Amen!"

But nay: beneath the white-oak trees,

Their heads uncovered to the breeze,

The festal rock they wait around;

And, while they wait, no other sound

Throughout the leafy grove is heard

Than stir of leaf, or song of bird,

Until they join in chorus all,

And thus in song devoutly call:—

“O Lord! to thee

All glory be,

Who gave this pleasant morning:

Help us to raise

Our hearts in praise

For rugged fields adorning.

For sunny skies

Our songs arise

To thee, who rules the weather :

For rocks and trees,

And bracing breeze,

We now give thanks together ;

For strength and health,

A freeman's wealth ;

For sweet, refreshing slumber ;

For daily bread,

O Fountain-head !

For blessings without number."

And now they turn with youthful zest,

And gladly yield to want's behest.

This rural feast is wholesome, sweet ;

And oft as youth in concourse meet

'Mid kindred scenes, 'tis well if some

Of older age may kindly come,

And thus prepare a festal board

To bring all hearts in true accord.
Ruth was the foremost of this band,
Ever free with heart and hand
To lend her love-compelling power
To swell the pleasures of the hour.

In younger days the winsome child
Was oft by brooks and flowers beguiled ;
Or, roaming lone the livelong day,
Would lose herself in wooded way.
A streamlet through a neighboring lea
Chants soft its murmuring melody ;
Its limpid waters gently flow ;
And on its borders lying low
Are violets pale in field of green,
Primroses bright, which stud the scene ;
And in its waters cool and clear
Seductive trout in spring appear.

Here wandered Ruth one spring-time day,
Upon its flowery banks to play ;
And long the little maiden tried
To catch the trout which she espied.
She sat upon the streamlet's edge,
Half hidden by the bordering sedge,
Beholding there her own dark eyes,
And, deeper down, the bluest skies :
Then, seeing suddenly a trout,
She tried with speed to lift it out ;
But, reaching far, oft-times it chanced
That danger came as Ruth advanced,
Forgetting else, on this intent,—
To seize the trout, where'er he went.
Then, hungry, tired, she left the spot,
Still holding in her childish thought
The pretty fish, which, darting swift,
Escaped her grasp as she would lift

The shining beauty to her side.
All these delights did Ruth confide,
As, home returned, her mother sought
To know the place whence she had brought
The water-flowers, which only grow
In brook-cleft meadows lying low.
The mother's heart with trembling filled,
With sudden fear her body thrilled,
As in her mind she pictured Ruth
Lost in the stream, — ay, lost in sooth;
And close she clasped her to her breast
Impulsively, that none might wrest
The precious darling from her care,
Whom ill her loving heart could spare.
From kindred dangers oft the child,
On rocky hill or woodland wild,
Was safe delivered by the Hand
Which shields the wanderer through the land.

Now daring grown, from hurt exempt,
She holds all danger in contempt ;
She gladly seeks the wildest nook,
And boldly fords the fleetest brook ;
Will quickly climb the rock's steep side,
And in its cleft securely hide ;
Can roam the densest forest wide,
And to its treasures safely guide :
So, when the morn's repast is o'er,
All, led by Ruth, these scenes explore.

Near by, a path is deeply worn,
Which, through our legend-lore, has borne
To childish minds a wonder vast
Concerning scenes in ages past.
By stampings made upon the ground,
There cometh loud a ringing sound,
Which oft is heard athwart the hill

When busy winds, perchance, are still.
Beneath this most mysterious spot,
By aged men it hath been thought,
That ere the Indians thither crept,
Or in the Stone House safely slept,
A wandering tribe of people came,
(To us unknown their home or name,)
And in this cavern (whence the sound)
A refuge safe in winter found.
A warlike tribe they seemed to be ;
And one beneath might chance to see
Their barbarous implements of war,
Which warriors used in regions far,
Whence they, perforce of foemen, came ;
And youthful minds bright pictures frame
Of richest gems and precious gold ;
And in their visions they behold
Unique designs in wood and stone,

In silver, ivory, and in bone.

They see bright bows and arrow-heads

Beside the gypsies in their beds

Who refuge sought beneath the ground ;

Whom, safe from earth, death's angel found.

Now, onward still, on either side,

Large, heavy mill-stones are descried,

Which long on stony couch have lain,

Burned by the sun, and worn by rain.

What memories of the olden time,

To men of locks with age's rime,

These relics of their early days —

Our distant past — must truly raise !

What sounds of hammer and of drill

Were sharply echoed o'er the hill

From forest dense, that since, in smoke,

And by the woodman's felling stroke,

Has passed away ! What visions blest
Of grinding mill that has no rest !
Yea, all the bliss of youthful scenes,
And all the time which intervenes,
Must come upon them by the sight
Of these their works of skill and might.

From these they come, through wooded way,
To rocky height, whose masses gray
Are held in love by maid and youth,
Who, like the gay, romantic Ruth,
Have sought their tops at morn and night,
And found thereon a rich delight.
Near where the tower, on rocky base,
Hath since by goodmen found its place,
The "Pony" stands, yclept the same
From nothing like in size or frame,
But that in childhood's fancy wild,

As oft there rode a happy child,
He thought it moved, as happens when
The gentlest horses carry men.
And now they climb the "Great Rock's" side,
Viewing the towns and woodlands wide ;
And forty church-spires pointing high
On every hand they may descry.
When rustic pleasures ruled the day,
And rural scenes held happy sway,
No morning came ; but, ere its night,
Some hither roamed for such delight
As gentle souls in Nature find
When pleasing thoughts absorb the mind.
If at the early morn they came
When sunshine clothed the east in flame ;
When leaves of overhanging trees
Dropped sparkling dewdrops in the breeze ;
When perfumes sweet from blooming vines,

And odors fresh from glistening pines,
Led them, deep-breathing, to inhale
The fragrant air, on sweets regale ;
Or, ere the twilight had begun,
They came to view the setting sun ;
Or came, when dusky forms were seen,
To greet the moonlight's cooling sheen,
Which, rising, gleamed the branches through,
From them received their homage true,—
They found, bestowed by Nature's grace,
Upon this rock a resting-place.
Hereto have lovers come at eve
Their burdened bosoms to relieve ;
And haply they have left content,
Or, burdened more, they homeward went.
Young students oft have sought this spot ;
Have here been lost in earnest thought ;
And by the voice of singing bird,

Or sound of leaf but faintly heard,
Have been diverted from the lore
Of human minds to that of more
Extended sense and nobler worth,
Though little read by men of earth.
This book of Nature openeth wide,
Wherein great wisdom doth abide:
It hath more treasure hid therein
Than man in state of active sin,
Or 'mid the cares and noisy strife
Which oft-times dull the inner life,
Will estimate can be contained.
Love is the power which hath explained
Its subtile meanings deep and vast,
Which link the present with the past,
And lead the mind to regions blest,
Where souls in rural scenes find rest.

Upon the titlepage we see
Its beauty and sublimity.
We know the loveliness and grace,
And its infinitude of space ;
But only as we deeply read,
And study well, can we indeed
Its wondrous lore assume to know
And understand while here below.
It works a spell on him who reads,
And answereth his spirit needs :
He cometh Nature's moods to know ;
And hallowed intercourse she doth allow.
Oh ! who hath known this gentle power,
And hath not blessed the happy hour,
When he, thrice glad, hath chanced to be
In presence of her majesty ?
Whom Nature thus vouchsafes to bless
With visions of her loveliness,

She giveth well to understand
Her tender love and power grand.

Not far removed, "Rock Revery" stands,
And overlooketh neighboring lands.

Here came, three generations past,
An Indian (of his tribe the last),
And on its height stood looking down
Athwart the fields, and toward the town.

His age was great, yet stout his frame,
And fierce his eye with inward flame:
His sight undimmed pierced through the space
Where oft he hunted beasts of chase:

But now he sees divided lands,
Fenced round by force of law's demands;
In place of wood are fields of corn;
And glittering spires the scene adorn.
The pale-face tills his hunting-grounds,

And with their wives the vale abounds ;
While long his squaw has lain in death,
And he alone must yield his breath.
He looks again, the aged brave ;
Then sighs that low within his grave
Each warrior of his nation lies :
He turns his head, and utters cries
Which find no answer but the sound
That echoing comes o'er rock and mound.
Ah, sad his fate ! " Alone, alone !"
He utters it in tearful tone :
Then sitting, bowed, he soon forgets
His woes and all his sad regrets ;
His mind is lost in revery.
We cannot tell what he may see,
But haply visions of the days,
When, lithe of limb, brave words of praise
And admiration for his skill

Were heard upon the selfsame hill.
For hours he lingered on the spot,
And nought disturbed his serious thought:
At length he moved, and stalked away,
Chanting a sad, monotonous lay.

The Maying-party laughed and sang;
Throughout the groves their music rang;
And morning hours were quickly spent
Among these scenes in merriment.

Ruth's mother, in New England born,
Held not these rural scenes in scorn;
Her Christian love, combined with sense,
Was not of frozen creeds intense;
She saw some good in Nature wild,
And in its wisdom taught her child;
She served her God in daily walk,
Gave not for this pretentious talk;

She held her duty to her God
More than the spreading tales abroad,
Under the guise of counsel sage,
To every rank of every age ;
She did not curse with bitter speech
The men who may their God beseech
On bended knees, or earnest more,
Who, standing, thus his aid implore ,
She did not with malicious sneer
Before the church oft-times appear,
Consigning to eternal fire
Those men who haply may expire
In firm belief that Christ has given
All souls on earth a hope of heaven ;
She was not cursed with love of cant,
Nor vexed the church with foolish rant ;
Her charity did all infold ;
She could some good in each behold ;

And all her life with love was sweet,
As in a Christian seemeth meet.

Thus Ruth was blessed with teachings plain;
Was taught that sinning left a stain;
That she must pray to be kept pure
From sundry sins which youth allure;
That nought our Father would command
But promised good on every hand:
And thus Ruth came to love his ways,
While oft her heart was filled with praise.
It was not dread of lasting woe
Which bade her seek the Lord to know:
Ruth was not frightened into good;
But mighty love was not withstood.

Beneath a roof whose plastered walls
No saint their luxury inthralls,

Nor holds the eyes of one sincere,
Would little Ruth each week appear :
There oft she heard the law explained,
Until her heart was sadly pained.
She saw the priest's vindictive smile
As he arraigned the sinners vile,
And heard the loud "Amen" exclaimed
As some strange sect was rashly blamed.
She heard the pietist profess
His godly zeal and holiness :
On modest souls his eyes looked down ;
He gave the weak a righteous frown.
Yet were there others who possessed
The Christian love which they professed :
Like lilies 'mong unseemly weeds
These humble folk of honest deeds.
A temple dearer to her heart
Was found, from all these scenes apart,

Among the trees in nearest wood,
Where children of the neighborhood
With parents came on Sunday eve
Their hearts in worship to relieve.
Here sounded sweet the sacred song
Arising from the gathered throng;
Here rose the earnest, heartfelt prayer
Upon the pine-tree-scented air;
Here love in every visage shone,
Was heard in every speaker's tone.
And truly God his presence lent
Unto the grove, his blessing sent.
Blest grove! and beautiful to see
Its noble forms of symmetry!
Ruth greatly grieved upon that day
When by the axe it passed away.
The happy hours of prayer and glee
She lived beneath each towering tree

Endeared to her their friendly shade ;
The pleasant paths their boughs arrayed :
And now it seemed old friends were dead,
When these, that whispered overhead,
Were stretched dismembered at her feet,
Did silently the maiden greet.
With saddened heart she bade farewell,
Her gentle voice their solemn knell:—

“Farewell, beloved grove!

Oh! never shall I rove

Within thy sacred borders more:

My poor heart mourns for thee;

For I shall never see

Thy stately beauty as of yore.

Farewell, beloved trees!

No more upon the breeze

Shall I your gentle whisperings hear :

Your notes will silent be,

And none shall answer me,

Throughout the long and cheerless year.

Farewell, sweet wood ! — farewell !

My lips can never tell

The grief my mourning spirit feels :

Thy noble trees were dear ;

And, lying mangled here,

Each to my aching heart appeals.

Farewell ! — oh, fare ye well !

None can my longing tell."

But save this sense of chastening pain,

Which did not come to Ruth in vain,

Her heart was light, and full of glee ;

Her life from grief was wholly free, —

Walking, running, climbing, springing,
From the highest birch-tree swinging;
Laughing, whistling, humming, singing,
Till the air with joy was ringing;
With the youth and maidens playing;
O'er the hill and meadows straying,
Rabbits in their pathway scaring,
Squirrels on the tree-tops sparing,
Startling partridges to whirring,
Setting all the wood to stirring;
In the pleasant moonlight roaming,
In the sunlight, or the gloaming.

This was the maid in days of youth,
Ere woman's sorrow came in truth.

PART II.

WOMANHOOD.

How sweet the hours of childhood's glee,
Its careless sport and thoughtless mirth,
When Heaven hath smiled in harmony
With blessed innocence on earth !
No other time is void of care,
Howe'er so bright our lives may be ;
No other days so pure and fair,
From vexing strife so fully free ;
No other days when sorrow hies
To chase a lost, despairing pain,
Which from the mind of childhood flies
As irksome drouth before the rain.
But soon a tinge of saddened thought

Will change the gayly-colored dream;
And shade, with brightness interwrought,
Will thus reveal the hidden scheme
Of pain and pleasure, peace and strife,
Of throbs of sadness and of glee,
Throughout the varying years of life,
How blest the name or fortune be.
And Ruth, though favored much by birth,
With grace of form and gentle mien.
With soul of strength, and mind for mirth,
Had found 'mid joys to intervene
A secret sadness that would weigh
Her spirits down, and cloud the smile
That once was bright and lightly gay.
She reasoned not that she, erstwhile,
Was happy as the singing birds,
And nought of toil or rude neglect,
Or loss of friends, or bitter words,
Or other ills that intersect

Our path in life, had brought unrest.
It came as comes a frost in June,—
A strange and most untimely guest,
Demanding flowerets for its boon,
The fairest, brightest, and the best,—
Then swift departed to the air
Which brought it from the cold north-west.
So, stealthily, from out his lair
The pard advances for his prey;
So, silently, the dusk of night
Descends upon the brightest day,
And quick absorbs the waning light.

Her pensive mood in Nature found
A precious, gentle sympathy;
For with sweet love their souls were bound
When Ruth, a child, was wild and free;
And now their love was stronger grown.

In sorrow did her poor heart turn
To trees and flowers she called her own,
That ne'er the hearts of mortals spurn.
Their old-time haunts she wandering sought
By paths her feet had often pressed,
Which led to some dear hallowed spot,
Where wind and leaves her hair caressed.
There were no paths she could not tell,
Throughout the woods, or o'er the hill;
She knew their windings through the dell,
Through meadow-lands, by rippling rill:
There was no shrub she could not find;
No flower but knew her welcome face;
No vine but glad had been entwined
Around her form of wondrous grace.
The little wild-flowers sadly smiled
As sorrowing Ruth went slowly by;
And fain her grief had they beguiled,

And hushed to sleep the rising sigh :
But when her heart would never cease
To long for something yet unknown,
Something to bring her gentle peace,
Some life to supplement her own ;
When still her thoughts ran wildly on, —
There was a need for human aid
Until the sad unrest were gone,
Till joyful rest had blessed the maid.

While roaming lone one day, it chanced
That in a pathway lined with trees,
And decked with flowers, as Ruth advanced,
There came upon the cooling breeze
The notes of singing soft and low ;
And by a sudden curve she spied
A manly form, and, friend or foe,
By good or ill she must abide.

But this surprise made glad his face,
And filled with joy his beaming eyes ;
For when saw man a form of grace,
And felt no pleasant thoughts arise ?
When came a maid with flowing hair,
With deep dark eyes, and gentle hand,
With features soft and witching fair,
And pleased not men in every land ?
With lifted hat and courteous smile
He glanced at Ruth, and passed her by,
Who blushed, and bowed her head the while,
Nor dared to meet his wondering eye.
She passed beyond obtruding trees
That in the path obscured the view,
And heard again upon the breeze
The rich-toned voice in accents new ;
For he, unmindful now of Ruth,
Or else to tease the maiden coy,

Began to sing of love forsooth,
Its pleasures and its precious joy.
He sang in soft and earnest tone,
As coos a wild bird to its mate ;
While Ruth, among the pines alone,
Was fain to list with heart elate.
But pride and honor both forbade
To listen longer to his song ;
And, hastening from the friendly shade,
She wended swift her way among
The smiling flowers and nodding ferns,
The heedless shrubs of low degree,
To where the pathway northward turns
Beside the flowering locust-tree,
And thence her home in twilight sought.
'Twas summer-time, and roses red
Adorned the rude vine-covered spot,
And on the air their perfume shed,

Where, loitering on her homeward way,
She spied a primrose, which at eve
Unfolds its petals ; while at day
Its watchful eyes a rest receive.
She plucked the flower, that, like her heart,
Since childhood with its mirth had fled,
Seeks comfort from the world apart,
And as she gazed, with loving, said, —

“ O thou sweet little primrose,
That awak'st at daylight's close !
I will speak without restraint ;
Thou shalt know my heart's complaint ;
Thou shalt hear what no one knows ;
I will tell thee all my woes.

Oh ! my heart hath ached so long,
That it sings the saddest song :

It can find no glad relief ;
And it sigheth in its grief
That this life is ever wrong,
As it shuns the human throng.

Listen, primrose ! I have seen
On the hill, in pathway green,
Where the pines enclose the way,
As the twilight met the day,
Some one tall, of manly mien :
None more noble e'er hath been.

Handsome ne, of gentle birth,
Born to them of moral worth :
By his hands and by his eyes
When we met in full surprise,
By his voice of chastened mirth,
Was made known his gentle birth.

Little primrose, listen well :
Though I blush at what I tell,
Yet my heart did leap to hear
Such sweet music sounding near,
That from lips so perfect fell
As I lingered in the dell.

But these tones are not for me :
I am nought to such as he.
I, a maid of humble birth,
Well am proud of moral worth,
Yet can never hope to be
What such men delight to see."

When thus her secret griefs were told,
The maid to silent musing fell ;
Yet leaving trees and dewy wold,
And quenching thirst from open well

With water pure and cold as springs
From mountain-top or mountain-side,
Or that the trickling brooklet brings
From where perpetual snows abide,
Ruth found her home with strange unease,
Avoiding human smiles or aid ;
Repelling those who fain would please,
And bless with hope the listless maid.

Long summer-days passed slowly by
With sultry air and parching earth ;
And cloudless skies had no supply
Of cooling rain to cease the dearth.
Then sickly men were nervous made ;
And women more were vexed with care ;
And children cried for cooling shade, —
For some relief from stifling air.
Then Ruth (kind heart !) forgot her woes,

(Which like a phantom cross the way,
And flee when real ills oppose,)
And gave her strength to cheer the day.
But Nature prayed with every breath
An agonizing prayer for rain
To save us all from direful death ;
And, lo ! her prayer was not in vain.
Throughout the heavens thick clouds were
spread ;
White, towering clouds rose from the north ;
And heavy thunders pealed o'erhead ;
And beauteous lightnings zigzagged forth.
Then darker grew the heavens and earth,
And stiller every life below ;
All faintly hoping that the dearth
Would end, and cooling breezes blow.
At last there came refreshing rains,
And all the earth did leap for glee :

Poor nervous men were free from pains,

And children cross 'gan to agree.

All women, men, sang in accord,

With thankful hearts by love inflamed,

“ Hurrah, hurrah ! ” or, “ Praise the Lord ! ”

While beasts no less their joy proclaimed,

But leaped and ran, and whisked about,

And sniffed the air with odors sweet,

Until in glee they seemed to shout,

And praise the Lord as then was meet.

Oh ! sweet the morn when drougts are past,

And fields are fresh from fallen rain !

When dog-star spirits stand aghast,

Nor grimly hope to rule again ;

When waning moon of ruddy hue

Has paled before the rising sun,

And nought remains but heavenly blue,

Through which its kingly course may run ;
When grass and trees are wet with dew,
And morning air is cool and clear ;
When drooping Nature lives anew,
Rejoicing with its wealth of cheer,—
What joy to roam among the trees
Which border on the forest dense,
That, bowing gently in the breeze,
Seem each to lose its reticence !
The pretty birdlings try to sing,
And gayly hop from shrub and tree ;
While mothers hear their twittering,
With intermitting songs of glee.
The air is filled with redolence,
With coolness, freshness, health, and love :
Its richness soars like sweet incense
To Him who sits enthroned above.
There is a voice that speaks herein,

Which calls the soul to earnest prayer,
That from its depths may banish sin,
And find no place for refuge there.
This winning voice oft spoke to her
While roaming lone in leafy wood, —
So oft, each seemed God's minister,
With gentle influence for good.

The autumn queen bore regal sway
O'er all the second northern zone ;
And silvery night and golden day ,
Revealed the beauty of her throne,
Uniting tones of royal hues —
Bright scarlet, purple, green, and gold —
With azure and terrestrial blues,
And mingling colors manifold ;
When Ruth, unburdened in her heart,
And happy like the autumn queen,

Resumed her wanderings apart
From human life to woodland scene
For precious sympathy in peace,
As they whom sincere friends may bless,
When sorrows rise or haply cease
Repair to them for gentleness.
Across the hill, 'mong rocks and mounds,
And 'neath the massive natural cope ;
Beyond the ancient mural bounds
That wind along the northern slope,
Where maples many-tinted grew,
And poplars light, with silvery leaves ;
Where steeping pines their shadows threw,
And light a victory achieves ;
Where leaves of chestnut vivid green,
And sapling oaks blood-red and wide,
A piquant beauty gave the scene,
That else was light diversified,—

Ruth roamed the early autumn days,—
Blest, heavenly days, the year's pure wine!—
Inhaling strength that ever plays
Where sunbeams in the woodland shine,
And purify the mellow air.
Bright wreaths of autumn-leaves she wrought,
And decked her lovely brow and hair,
With nought of pride or selfish thought,
Unconscious that her queenly grace
Adorned the garlands that she wore,
Gave added charms unto the place.
Light branches in her hands she bore,
And thoughtful wandered through the wood,
Inspiring, with the air she breathed,
Most blessed influence for good,
Which o'er her soul sweet garlands wreathed
More beautiful than those she made;
And yet thrice fair the form so pure

On which the offerings were laid ;
While both in heaven shall e'er endure ;
For what on earth of grace we find,
And add to beauty in the soul,
Shall to the last be found enshrined,
Affording joy as ages roll.

As well-bred girls in country life
Few moments spare for idle ease
'Mid cares in humble homesteads rife,
'Mong scenes so ill designed to please,
But work with will and cheerful face
To light the labor from her hands
Who gave them place for heavenly grace
To bless the life which e'er expands ;
So labored Ruth, with willing mind
And ready hands, through every day :
But ever did she joy to find

Some leisure hour, wherein, away
From toil and care and homely scenes,
She might with Nature talk and pray;
And what the end might seem were means
To lead her up to the holy way.
And all oppressed with heavy cares
Which weigh them down, and chill the heart,
May find that Nature with them shares
Their grief, or bids it all depart.

When winter came, and chilling days
Made drear the outdoor scenes of home;
When long the sun withheld its rays,
And clouds obscured the sunlit dome,—
There came a missive (quaintly sealed
With superscription neat and plain),
Which to the mother loud appealed,
And begged its plea be not in vain.

"Can Ruth," it read, "at Christmas-tide
Come hither, and with us remain?
Can she with us for weeks abide,
That feasts of love we may obtain?"
The mother pondered in her mind
The kind request, nor answer made
That she acceded or declined,
Until before the father laid.
Then forth to Ruth the mother went,
And gave the letter to her hands.
"Your father gives his full consent,
And we are one in holy bands,"
She mildly said; and Ruth was glad.
Her cherished wish had been to hear
The hallowed music, light or sad,
Which to the masters did appear
As visions to the prophets wise
When they beheld things new and old,

Most heavenly sights that cheered their eyes,
And wondrous beauties half untold.

She went, and warmly was received ;
For they — her friends — were true and kind,
And in their Christian hearts believed
A country maid might be refined,
And worthy of their pure regard
No less than they in cities pent ;
That, though her features might be hard,
Her heart with loving would relent.

Fair Ruth shamed not her gentle friends,
Nor gave their Christian courage test :
As moonlight soft with starlight blends,
So joined with them their comely guest.
Her form was perfect ; and her eyes
Shone bright with depth of mental light ;

Her hair a color that defies
The artist's touch to paint aright ;
Her bearing modest, unrestrained ;
Her voice most musical and sweet.
A woman they had entertained, —
Sweet name ! — where love and virtue meet.

Glad day on earth, Christ's birthday, came,
Who through all time entreats above.
Blest time ! Sweet singers praised his name,
And instruments proclaimed his love.
They sang " Messiah : " hundreds sang
That wondrous work of heavenly chords,
Which from the Source of music sprang
When *Handel* prayed the Lord of lords.
All, all, were Christians on that night,
Who sang or heard Messiah's praise :
They in his glory took delight,

And longed to follow in his ways.
No one rebelled ; for music's sway
Was mighty to dethrone ill-will ;
And Christ was all, — the Truth, the Way,
The One who should all nations fill.
Ruth listened, marvelled, wept, and prayed,
And breathed the soul of music in.
Her simple trust in Christ was stayed ;
Her heart was free from stain of sin.
When His, the Saviour's, name was sung —
“The mighty God! the Prince of peace!
The Wonderful!” — by every tongue,
Did all the eager voices cease ;
And instruments in gentle tones
Breathed out the “Pastoral Symphony.”
O music! meet for hallowed thrones
Whence comes the purest harmony.
No fields defined might then appear,

Nor skipping lambs, nor running brooks ;
No shepherds piping, sitting near,
Or watching, leaning on their crooks ;
But such a sense of open air,
Of rippling stream and gentle breeze,
Of verdant plains and valleys fair,
Of lovely hills, and clumps of trees,
Comes to the mind and happy heart,
That one forgets the place and time,
And in the spirit doth depart
To rural scenes and warmer clime.
Our pretty maid was rapt in joy, —
Delicious joy, that borders pain,
Which will enhance, and not destroy,
The strong desire to hear again.
And when the rich contralto sung,
That like a shepherd would He feed
His tender flocks, the ewes with young

Would lovingly and gently lead,
Ruth was not colder than the rest,
Whose faces beamed with tender love ;
Who in their hearts the Shepherd blest
That he descended from above
To place each one within the fold
Who would not strive to hide away ;
Who bears the young, and leads the old
Through darkest night or stormy day.
Then came the blessed, "Come to him,
All ye who labor and are faint ;
All ye whose sight is growing dim,
Come, make to him your heart's complaint ;
Come, ye with weight of sin oppressed, —
Come, learn of him, tell him your pain,
And he will bless, and give you rest ;
Will hear your prayer, ne'er raised in vain."
'Twas thus to Ruth the bidding came,

In yearning love embracing all,
Forgiving each, imputing blame
To none, who, heartsick, to him call.

Amid the sorrows that befell
Our gracious Lord upon the earth,
So did the maiden's bosom swell
As ne'er had happened since her birth.
But when, ascended to the skies,
The "Hallelujah Chorus" rang,
The tears of loving filled her eyes,
And in her heart his victory sang.
Nor less she joyed that through his death
Came restoration unto life ;
That, when this body yields its breath,
It finds a land with blessings rife.
And then the last "Amen" was heard,
While solemn silence covered all,

And not a man of all had stirred.

Yet slowly now they left the hall.

The moon upon the housetops shone,

Leaving the street in partial shade ;

And high the church-spires, standing lone,

Against the sky dark figures made :

The air was still and cheery cold,

Awaking Ruth from revery,

Uncasing that which did infold

Her being like a panoply.

'Tis sweet to be inthrall'd by tones

That issue from a source divine ;

To feel the powers that from the thrones

Reveal to man the secret sign

By which he claims a kindred love,

And comforting fraternal ties,

With those whose songs are sung above

The home of hallowed harmonies.
But pleasant 'tis on earth once more
To breathe the earthly atmosphere ;
To walk, perchance, and not to soar
Forever through the ether clear.
And Ruth, though beautiful and pure,
A virgin sweet and blest to see,
Was not an angel to endure :
She was but frail humanity.

The morning dawned on dreaming minds
Attuned to music's witching spell,
Which oft in retrospection binds
As first upon our ears it fell.
That morning's night was full of mirth ;
For well-tried friends assembled there,
Of moral and of mental worth,
To meet the country maid so fair.

Within the parlors of her host
Were gallant men of visage fine ;
And 'twas the gentle hostess' boast,
That nowhere better did combine,
Or men of parts distinguished more.
It was the artist's house of rest,
Whate'er the sacred mark he wore
Upon the countenance impressed.
Some did with pencil deftly draw,
And with the brush give tender hues ;
While others thought by music's law,
Did oft in verse their thoughts diffuse,
Or gave expression full in sounds
That came from organ or from lyre,
Or held their souls in graceful bounds,
In forms that speak the sculptor's fire,
God-given and by his sons possessed.
No cold restraint or chilling ways

Among these men by Heaven blessed ;
But all beneath the shining rays
Of true good-will were warmed to deeds
That would not shame themselves alone ;
Or e'en were better that the needs
Of artist nature they could own
By look or tone, and not receive
A covert sneer or open frown
Because some dullards must believe
A man an idiot or a clown
Whoe'er affection's smile betrays,
With kindly heart his pity shows,
Or his delight unchecked displays,
As though no men were counted foes.
The ox his inmost thought retains,
Nor to his mind expression gives ;
His highest joys, severest pains,
Are hidden deep as on he lives ;

Or else, perchance, he does not feel,
He cannot think, as living men,
And that his woe or richest weal
Is past his bovine care or ken.
If some behold their counterpart,
Then let them know that such as they,
In mind, in soul, or dwindling heart,
Ne'er to this mansion found their way.
There ruled the freedom genius lends
To kindred natures richly blessed ;
There was the intercourse of friends
Which all tired souls find truly rest.

Among these men of high degree
Was one of marked and manly mien :
His countenance was fair to see,
As might have pleased a youthful queen.
He was not quick of dawdling speech,

Nor over-bold with older men ;
Yet with his ductile mind could reach
Abstrusest thought by tongue or pen.
His language, to convey his thought
In all its subtle windings through
The intricacies, interwrought
With other thoughts by nature too,
Was music, universal tongue,—
The same o'er all the peopled earth, —
The same the shining stars among
Wherein the sacred song had birth.
His name was Hiel, — he, in truth,
Whom, where the pines enclose the way
On Stone-house Hill, our maiden Ruth
Espied as twilight met the day.
Their eyes had looked to depth of soul,
When now, each recognized, they met :
Into each life there seemed to roll

4

A pleasure unacknowledged yet.
But, save with look, no sign he gave
Of what she felt his thoughts to be,
Until it floated on the wave
Of richest organ melody.
He played ; and 'mid the pastoral tones
He introduced the air he sang
Among the fragrant pine-tree-cones,
Which softly through the branches rang.
'Twas pleasing harmony to all ;
But unto Ruth it laden came
With earnest, thrilling, fond heart-call,
As if he spoke to her by name,
And with admiring glances made
His passion known in common speech,
Besought her for her loving aid
As lovers oft with words beseech.
Her cheeks were crimson, like the flower

Of blooming cactus by her side.
As at the early morning hour
Clear dew-drops on the grass abide,
And glisten, trembling, in the sun ;
So on her soft dark lashes shone
The crystal tears when he was done,
And she had sought some nook alone.

4

Congratulations warm they made
Who heard the mellow organ-tones,
And said the way in which he played
Would bring him praise from Europe's thrones,
As came to one whose music sweet
Grows sweeter, dearer, more beloved,
As oft its harmonies may greet
Our inner senses, and be proved
The holy language of his heart.
Though Hiel worshipped Mendelssohn,

He more desired to move apart,
And find the maiden standing lone,
Than list their honest, heartfelt praise:
But like a hero he endured
Their courtesies; received the bays
His longing heart had swift abjured.
Then Ruth — to foil the man in love,
Or check his hot, unseemly haste,
His depth of earnestness, to prove
Her own sweet spirit pure and chaste —
Commingled with the cheerful throng,
And her appreciation told
With words that seemed melodious song
To Hiel's ears by love cajoled.
He sought her eyes, but met them not,
Though hungering he to recognize
Some sweet, reciprocated thought,
Some true soul-flash that speech defies.

'Tis ever thus with womankind :
Most innocent of man's regard,
They harass and perplex the mind,
And then at intervals discard,
Until in wrath he bids farewell,
His lasting love in anger merged ;
When they inquire what ill befell
The man to desperation urged.
With soft, insinuating glance,
A maiden marvels at his speech ;
And, that her cause she may advance,
Will condescend his lips to reach :
When, ten to one, the man relents,
And with redoubled force declares
His sincere love ; while she repents,
And thence his lot with loving shares.

Ruth ne'er so beautiful had seemed

As on that cheerful winter's night,
When, 'neath the jets that brightly gleamed,
She stood revealed by softened light, —
A maiden fair in glance and form ;
A gentle maiden, blithe and pure ;
A maiden beautiful, and warm
In heart, with charms that men allure.
And loving Hiel was not blind
To all her sweet and varied charms :
He longed, with ardor of his kind,
To clasp her, trembling, in his arms.
But now more distant seemed the hour
That should afford him joy like this,
Should see her yielding to his power,
Permitting him an ardent kiss,
Than when the evening first began.
He did not understand her heart,
As happens oft with cunning man,

Outwitted by a woman's art.
In music's lore was Ruth well learned,
And sang with ease some simple songs
Which weak-brained damsels would have spurned;
For healthy taste to strength belongs.
With their request who knew her voice
Their guest most willingly complied,
And gave a ballad of her choice,
With nought of hauteur or of pride.
Her rich, pure tones pleased every ear :
Sweet Ruth ne'er sang so well before ;
And, free from forwardness as fear,
Her coy demeanor pleased them more.
Close on her words the young man hung
To find for him some sign of grace ;
But nought escaped her guarded tongue
To which her heart had given place.
Then Hiel, filled with deep chagrin,

Confessed himself o'ermuch unwise
When he, the tall of manly mien,
Saw burning love in her dark eyes.
The song was ended: Ruth arose
'Mid many murmurs of applause;
And soon the social evening's close
Prorogued the fate of Hiel's cause.

The hour was midnight when the maid,
Our country-maid, sought needed rest:
She found no sleep; for what he played
Ran through her mind at love's behest.
Such tender tones, that spoke the voice
Of one whose passion held control,
That bade fair Ruth with fear rejoice,
And filled the grottoes of her soul,
Came now in silent hours of night,
Resounding with increase of tone,

Revealing with magnetic light
To Ruth, in darkness lying lone,
The eyes of love that brightly beamed,
Or mournfully and softly shone,
That now, in cold reproving, seemed
As though all hope was overthrown.
She saw her own coquettish ways,
And by her conscience was reproved;
For pleasing hope's all-cheering rays
Fell sweet on her as Hiel loved:
And now she knew the poignant pain
Inflicted, as no answering look
She gave to Hiel, when he fain
Had sought her in that friendly nook.
'Twas vain she pleaded modesty
Forbade a recognition then:
Her conscience made discourtesy
Iniquity 'mong Christian men,

And reasoned thus,—if she relied
Upon his honor, and confessed
Her wakened love, when by his side
He to her eyes his plea addressed,
Then did she wrong to disregard
His love by organ-tones expressed,
And was discourteous to discard
So heartlessly a welcome guest.

These are but little sins, some say,
Not worthy to be reckoned up,
While they accomplish every day
A hundred-fold, nor fill the cup.
Ah, well! to damsels of the world,
Whose trappings cover faithless hearts,
Whose flaunting banners are unfurled
In maidens' matrimonial marts,
It may be so; but to the maid

All innocent of worldly wiles
Her healthy conscience truly said,
“Condemned is she whoe’er beguiles
A trusting heart to freely hope ;
Then, through caprice or cruel sport,
In dark despair leaves him to grope
With semblance of unmanly port.”

Poor Ruth was vexed within herself
That she belied her hungering heart,
And said some evil-minded elf
Had entered her to act the part
So much against her own desire ;
For, since they met in wooded way,
Had she but thought she could aspire
With faintest hope’s obscurest ray
To such companionship as this,
She had been satisfied to live

In prospect of connubial bliss
As Heaven would vouchsafe to give.
That was a romance fine to Ruth.
He was a brave and valiant knight ;
And she the lady, who, in truth,
Should crown him victor in the fight.
She read of this in knightly lore,
And in her restless, craving mind
Had pictured scenes in days of yore,—
Brave knights with lady-loves refined.
Thus she, unconsciously, had made
Reality of what she dreamed,
And all her heart and prospects laid
Before the knight, whose helmet gleamed
So brightly in the setting sun ;
Whose armor sat with polished grace ;
Who was by none of old outdone
In courtly bow or gentle face ;

Whose bearing was so nobly proud,
So like the crested warrior's mien,
So like in courtesy when he bowed,
As first they met on pathway green.
And now—when he his love bestowed
With sudden impulse, giving all
His wealthy heart, as he had owed
A debt, that, chafing, did inthrall,
But last had ventured to be free,
If even life must recompense—
Had Ruth (oh, such consistency!)
Assumed an air of self-defence,
As if, forsooth, she then would spurn
What she had coveted before,
And from his tender loving turn
When richest blessings were in store.
But Ruth was young: scarce eighteen years
Had seen her dark and glowing eyes ;

Had moved her heart with hopes and fears,
With saddened thought, or glad surprise ;
And when events like waters roll,
Pregnant with weal, upon our lives,
E'en we our ways do not control
Until cool reason's power revives.
Now, blest be woman's innate sense !
Hot tears soon came to her relief ;
And, ere she slept, sweet penitence
Had chased away corroding grief.

Cold stormy days then intervened :
The streets were white with new-made snow ;
Large falling flakes the cloud-heavens screened
From all inhabitants below.
The muffled bells made cheerless sound
Upon the damp, snow-laden air
As through the streets the coachmen wound

Their way with more than wonted care.
The buildings all were corniced round
With mouldings formed in purest white;
Fresh stuccoes on the towers were found;
And trees and statues were bedight
In Nature's undisguised array:
The powers were crystallizing light,
That lighter made the lightest day,
And with its sheen illumed the night.
But days of storm were tedious grown,
Though beauty filled the outer air:
The wind made most distressful moan,
As one who dies in dread despair.
The year was dying; and the sound
Was dismal to all nervous ears,
Albeit a young year soon would bound
Into the world, and scatter fears.
The midnight came; and tolled the bell

Its age of months in sombre tones :
But joy renews ; the babe is well ;
Nor longer sound despairing groans.

The new year's happy greetings swelled
The joy of sunlight's welcome cheer ;
And love to every bosom welled
From offerings made the new-born year.
'Tis well in this prosaic land
That festal days are not ignored ;
For in their genial warmth expand
Our thoughts to regions unexplored,
And treasures undivined before.
The heart hath more of good within,
When once some key unlocks the door,
Than men suspect, who look with sin —
A blinding beam—in their own eyes.
There is no man but has some good ;

None who assume to gods to rise
But has some sin-taint in his blood.
The kindly interchange of thought,
The learning well each human heart,
Brings love where charity was not ;
Makes envious hate, ashamed, depart.
Then hail all festal days with joy,
As well-appointed means of grace,
When active thoughts our minds employ,
And heart-lights play on every face.
Bright, sacred days ! How oft in age
The mind recalls such scenes in youth,
That, bright in colors, light a page
Of life's great book, which is in sooth
Too sombre, murky, for our eyes,
When waning life has made them dim,
And pleasures, deep obscured, arise,
Unless some joyous festal hymn

Shall softly, clearly sound amid
The dull confusion that shall seem
As if the love of God were hid,
And life were but a troubled dream !
Then, quick as though sweet music's voice
Had conjured up the lumined leaf,
It comes, and bids the heart rejoice,
And in the vision lose its grief.

To Hiel came the bright new year,
A pleasing change to stormy days,
When moaning winds and heavens drear
Were unrelieved by cheering rays ;
The more, his mind was low depressed,
And Nature seemed to give no hope
That he, with her his love addressed,
Could with success in wooing cope.
When first he left the maiden coy,

His passion tortured him with fear ;
Suggested what would most annoy ;
Made small obstructions great appear.
It led (of all who love how true!)
To lower estimate of self,
Of all his powers to think and do,
And all paternal, hoarded pelf ;
While her, a pretty country maid,
He deemed a lady rich and fair,
And glad his heart and wealth had laid
Low at her feet, his love to share.
'Tis thus that loving blinds the mind
To native worth in him who wooes,
But makes the vision thrice refined
To see her worth for whom he sues.
Blest be the man, the woman blest,
When kindred thoughts outlive one moon !
They give to married life a zest ;
Make love, indeed, a precious boon.

With sunlight came a clearer head ;
In sequence came a lighter heart ;
And then the will that he would wed
Through aid by his celestial art.
He knew that music wondrous power
Held o'er the life he sought to gain ;
And felt that some propitious hour
His soul might call, nor call in vain.
How oft it is, that, when we will,
There opens clear a needed way,
But, when the mind is idly still,
We see no path but leads astray !
Ruth's social host reception gave
To friends select, in numbers few,—
Two bearded men, with carriage grave,
To whom their host obeisance shew ;
And two in manner less reserved,
With faces moulded from within

By spirits who in youth subserved
The natural law of noble kin,
To whom he likewise gave respect
As to young men whose ancestry
Was such as people ne'er neglect,
Who boast of like high pedigree.

The twain were Hiel and a friend
Of college-days, who felt, in each,
Such qualities as sweetly blend,
And in their precious blending teach
True soul-communion, which we trust
One day to feel, when bodies pure,
And free from power of clogging dust,
Can blest, transcendent bliss endure.
With words of wisdom from the guests
Of ripened age and serious port,
Whose dignity precluded jests,

Or trivial words for idle sport,
The young men freely were regaled ;
Though careless Hiel that the feast
Was one the wisest might have hailed,
And mourned the time when it had ceased.
Yet elsetimes had he listened well ;
And fain was he to learn of men
Whene'er such words of wisdom fell
From honored lips as issued then.
But other purpose stirred the breast
Of plotting Hiel while they dined ;
And thus the speech to all addressed
Found poor reception by his mind.
At early hours (by reason led)
Each aged guest with grace retired,
And swift the pleasing moments sped ;
While wooing Hiel seemed inspired
To speak, with music's eloquence,

The thoughts his earnest mind contained ;
Or more, there seemed a strong defence
Was being stormed, as arrows rained
Upon the guarded citadel ;
Or that the fort were undermined
By waters, murmuring as they fell
A lullaby to those confined.
He played his art with conquering hand ;
A conscious strength was in his touch :
He felt the guard would not withstand
The force that battled them with such
Untiring zeal and powerful arms.
Though Ruth was pleased that he returned,
And thus had owned her gentle charms,
Whom once in sport she coolly spurned,
Yet was she angry : for she knew
His conquering mien bespoke his will
(Despite impediments she threw

Within his way) to woo her still;
And more, that he in mind had said —
Though she demurred, and answered “Nay” —
He would in truth the maiden wed,
And date his conquest from that day.
Ruth steeled her heart with woman’s pride,
And pledged resistance with her will;
But there’s a power can override
The stubborn mind, and wield it still.
When love comes surging from the soul, —
A never-ceasing, growing love, —
’Tis like the ocean-tides that roll
Swift through the narrow-bounded cave,
And force the dark *débris* away.
Ruth’s anger ceased as Hiel played
More tenderly without display:
She trusted self, nor felt afraid
To hear the music soft and low,

That pleased the ear, but gave no thought
Of spirit-contest with her foe,
That now her precious being sought.
Ah, pretty Ruth! thy foe is he?
How innocent of worldly wiles
Thy spotless, happy soul must be,
That thou dost greet his song with smiles!
Thou dost not see his courtier face;
Thine eyes are looking far away—
So far away!—to boundless space.
Now will thy heart unguarded stay?
How imperceptibly it glides
Upon the stream of melody!
How carelessly it now confides
In its delightful revery!

O victory! Her heart is thine,—

Thine, Hiel! Thou hast wooed her well:

Now let your lives in one combine,
Soft gentle tones to pæans swell.

The music ceased. Then Hiel rose,
And cast one glance to Ruth's deep eyes:
He saw no will that would oppose,
No anger in her bosom rise.
He knew his victory complete,
And, human like, rejoiced in this,
But hastened not by look to greet
The heart he fondly felt was his.
The petty part of man controlled
Successful Hiel in that hour;
And, like all souls in mortal mould,
He joyed to exercise his power.
He feigned to be (a woman's way)
Unconscious that a heart was gained;
That e'en love-brightened eyes one ray

Of hope to give had ever deigned.
Then deep within Ruth's tender heart
There rankled doubts of Hiel's love.
Oh, would he speak to her apart!
Would he with words his loving prove!
But no: he leaves her still alone,
And mingles gayly with the rest.
"Oh that my heart were made of stone,
Or that no heart were in my breast!"
The pretty maid in anguish sighs.
"I love him, love him!" and she moans;
While all her friends, in pained surprise,
Inquire the meaning of such tones.
She is betrayed! nay, woman's wit
Quick hies to give her timely aid.
A sudden pain had come, but flit
As quickly as the moan she made.
But Hiel knew the cause of pain,

And did upbraid himself in grief :
His love leaped towards her, and he fain
Had died to give her heart relief.

When fortune left them once alone,
He looked down into her sad eyes ;
And from his eyes a love-light shone,
That both beheld a sacrifice.

Then told he her with winning speech
His own true, great, impassioned love,
And did in earnest tones beseech,
As craving blessings from above.

But, strange perverseness if it be,
Or modesty, — whate'er its name, —
Ruth shyly heard his ardent plea,
And seemed alarmed that thus the flame
Herself had kindled hotly burned.

But, when a woman's love is sought,

It is not oft a man is turned,
By coyness shown, to yield his thought;
It makes his zeal twofold more great:
For nought, methinks, can more delight
The manly soul with love elate
Than this sweet, virgin-clinging sight.
And Hiel pressed his suit the more.
She yielded, as it seemed, perforce;
But who can woman's mind explore,
Or of her actions tell the source?

Two hearts were happy made that night;
Two souls seemed blended into one;
Two minds were filled with visions bright;
Two lives a new life had begun.

And now the days passed swiftly by
Until the Lenten season came,

When Ruth to country home must hie,
And greet the kind and patient dame,
Who mother-like had bid her stay,
Where friends were kind, and life was sweet,
Until the coming of that day
When churchmen cease to gayly meet
And blithely talk 'mid festal scenes,
Each mindful of the forty days
When Christ our Lord by human means
Was hungered, grieved in divers ways.
A sad farewell she gave to all,—
To Hiel and her kindred dear;
While each did earnestly recall
Her presence ere the next new year.
In Hiel's eyes there shone a gleam
Of happy thought amid their tears;
For they had planned a lovers' scheme,
Unheard by less attentive ears.

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Again at home! Oh! dear the place,
The sacred scene of sportive youth;
And sweet the smile which lights the face
Of each who greets returning Ruth.
With fond and long-admiring gaze
The father welcomes home his child;
And last, in ill-disguised amaze,
His greeting gives with cadence mild.
His Ruth is like a blooming rose,
Which dews of early day adorn,
That grew a bud at evening's close,
And freshly opened with the morn.
The mother clasps her to her breast
In one long, anxious, close embrace:
Can any dare her darling wrest
From such a happy hiding-place?
Yes, mother dear; for man is bold

Who loves with full and glowing heart.
Dost thou the story need be told
That made thy mother feel the smart?
He will be kind to her he loves :
Oh, be not cruel, thou, to Ruth !
Who yields the will most loving proves,
And gives her spirit joy in truth.
But still a mother's heart will yearn ;
Her silent voice than bleating ewe
More eloquent when daughters turn
From their old love, and love anew.

Yet now the mother well approved
This gentle Hiel for his worth,
The soberness with which he loved ;
Was rightly proud of his good birth.
While Ruth from home had lingering staid,
Her hostess (with her mother born

Of parents like, beneath the shade
Of cottage roof the selfsame morn)
Had sister-like portrayed the man
Who sought the maiden's virgin love,
As truly as a woman can
Whose will and heart the man approve.
The mother praised her daughter's choice ;
Her mind was pleased ; though still so young,
She murmured while she would rejoice ;
Yet blessings loosed her guarded tongue,
And love infolded him as son
Close to her heart, as women will
Whose precious souls are not undone
Through selfishness or treatment ill.
The father no restrictions laid
Upon their hearts he loved the best ;
And, trusting them, seemed not afraid
In their result to calmly rest.

Then came the cold and stormy days,
The winds of March, that blustering sound
Beneath the dull, cloud-hidden rays,
As if some powerful fiend had found
Ten thousand imps, and on each head
In madness wreaked his vengeful ire,
His growing hate by fury fed,
Till, crushed, with moans they all expire.

Descending fast, the rain and sleet
Incrusted all in wood and field,
Till bending boughs their trunks did meet,
In icy masses were congealed.
Late hushed the storm ; and on the air,
Now still and breathless in its peace,
Comes Easter-morn with beauty rare ;
As when heart-pains and troubles cease,
Upon the face anon there rests

A saintly light, illumined love,
That of its somberness divests,
And fashions it like those above.
The earth is still ; in silence grand !
Too blest with joy to break the spell
That holds its soul by God's command :
Such depths of joy can silence tell !
O beauteous world ! Each little fern
And blade of grass, each towering tree,
Each branch and twig, that we discern,
Is clothed with bright transparency.
When sunlight from its rising cloud,
Now unobscured, quick flashes o'er
This glorious scene of Nature bowed,
As when devoutly men adore,
A multitude of radiant lights
Make glorious the vestal view,
And fill our souls with pure delights,
With thankfulness for blessings new.

See gentle Ruth, so fresh and fair,
Come nimbly o'er the crusted snow,
Her locks scarce moving on the air,
Her thoughtful face with joy aglow!
She walks beneath the crystal trees,
Whose glistening branches, bending low,
Her hand may touch, therefrom to seize
The hanging fruits that clustering grow.
Her tender heart is filled with prayer
From Nature's influence divine,
That quavers on the morning air,
And in the rays that brightly shine,—
Fit emblems of that holy sun
That rose triumphant Easter-day,
Ne'ermore to set, while day begun
Shall brighter grow for aye and aye.
“On this sweet Easter-morn,” she prays,
“So beautiful beyond compare,

Thrice blest among the holy days,
Than all the other days more fair,
Oh! make my soul as pure as this,
To crystal brightness purified.
Methinks I feel thy holy kiss,
O Saviour mine!—thou who hast died,
And who hast risen on Easter-morn,
More beautiful than else on earth.
I thank thee, Father, he was born;
I bless the day that gave me birth."

Ah! Nature's voice is Heaven's word,
No less than Scripture, God-inspired:
'Tis oft 'mid simple beauty heard,
In some sweet rural spot retired;
It cometh oft 'mid beauty grand,
Where towering rocks o'erhang the lea;
It cometh far away from land,

From out the deep, glad-sounding sea ;
It cometh oft by singing bird,
Whose liquid notes are filled with light ;
Amid the glare of day 'tis heard ;
But most, methinks, at morn and night.

At noon there rose a gentle breeze,
When sunshine warm the gems had loosed,
And stirred the brightly glittering trees,
That o'er the ground their fruits diffused ;
And, as they fell, like diamonds gleamed
Each sparkling jewel in the light,
That all the air with splendor seemed
To revel gayly till the night.
On lofty top of western wood
There lingered yet, at sunset-hour,
Some rubies fine ; and crimson blood
Is not more bright, nor hath more power

To tinge the cheek to lovely hue,
Than these to shed a roseate glow
(Relieved by shade of azure blue)
Upon all waiting eyes below.
Ruth, from a window looking, gazed
Upon the glowing scene with joy,
And softly whispered, "God be praised!
Let thankful songs all hearts employ."
Still, when the evening shades were nigh
That closed the glorious Easter-day,
Ruth lingered, looking toward the sky,
So like her thoughts, then far away.
She saw a bright and beauteous land,
Adorned as Nature's favorite spot;
She saw its beauties quick expand
As oft unfolds a growing thought.
Each dainty step new glory came;
And music sweet was in the air:

She heard her own plain-spoken name,
And, looking forth, saw Hiel there.
Then side by side the spirits walked,
(For thus to Ruth the vision seemed,)
And of the wondrous beauty talked,
More strange than e'er on earth they dreamed.
As they conversed, a third appeared,
So glorious and all divine,
They marvelled both ; and, as he neared,
He seemed in carriage to combine
A wondrous grace with dignity.
He spake : his voice was like the sound
Of most delightful melody ;
His face in sweetness did abound ;
His eyes were deep as heaven's blue, —
No human mind their depth could tell ;
His features all were bright in hue ;
And round his form a glory fell.

“I am the Lord of these fair lands
Whereon with happy hearts you tread :
On earth you kept the two commands ;
And now through heaven you shall be led,
Together roaming, ever free
From pains of heart, of growing soul,
(Which yet shall grow eternally,
As never still the ages roll :)
New beauties shall unfold each day ;
New glories shall appear to you ;
And love shall bless your hearts always,
Which most they feel whose lives are true.”

Then Ruth and Hiel bowed them low
Before the great and generous King ;
While he a blessing did bestow,
And made their hearts with rapture sing.
But, while they knelt (in Ruth's sweet dream),

A voice to her the scene dissolved,
And, from the life that did but seem,
Her mind to real life revolved.

When minds by visions bright are led
From earth to regions bright and fair,
And with celestial fruits are fed
That odorous fill the ambient air ;
When heavenly nectar slakes their thirst,
Intoxicates to ecstasy,
And then, as suddenly accurst,
These precious blessings quickly flee,—
There comes a painful loss that tires
The hungering soul which pants and faints,
Yet never from its loss expires,
But utters e'er its sad complaints.
Ruth's heart now yearned for Hiel's love ;
And while she mused with inward pain,

And plaintive mourned as wounded dove,
Her soul to Heaven did complain :
It felt a pained and sad unrest.
As wearied heads will fondly long
For pillowed ease upon some breast,
Some manly bosom, true and strong ;
So longed sweet Ruth for Hiel's care,
And sure protection in his love,
Who joyously her pain would bear,
And his devotion fully prove.

Thus noble souls in flesh will yearn,
Evincing sweet humanity ;
Not demon-like, as they who spurn
The act or thought of sympathy.
But there be some who steel their hearts
Against the stamp of loving words ;
As if, forsooth, he who departs

From gentle ways, morosely girds
Himself with stoutest robes, self-spun,
Destroying love and energy,
Till, weak in heart and all undone,
Is nobler, more a man, than he
Who lives receiving, and to give,
As Christ himself hath taught to do;
Who, open-hearted, tries to live
A brave man, sympathetic, true.

Then passed the days of freezing by:
The open rivulets and ponds,
By music uttered mournfully,
Proclaimed release from icy bonds.
The peeping frogs made evening sad
To lonely Ruth: their monotones —
So shrill, yet plaintive (seldom glad),
And coming from beneath the stones

With rushes, weeds, and water bound—
Had most mysterious influence,
As if some strange, uncanny sound—
A warning voice—her spirit sense
Thereby had reached, and sorrow left.
O dreaming Ruth! romantic maid!
What if thou art of him bereft
A little time: let not a shade
Of doubt thy longing heart distress.
Do not his loving letters tell
That he thyself would fain caress;
That he is joyed if thou art well,
And sad if aught has made thee ill?
Does he not hold thee as his life?
Does he not seek to know thy will?
Would he not die to save thee strife?
Speak now thy soul, O lonely Ruth!
And tell it to the listening stars;

Yea, tell it to the friends of youth :
They may remove what now debars
Thy heart from peace, thy wonted peace :
Some weirdsome influence they may hold
To make the pains of lovers cease,
If prophets right the heavens have told.

Nay, to the stars she tells it not :
There is no balm in their soft gleam
To soothe her mind to gentle thought.
She claims no calm : nay, it would seem
Unloyal now to still her soul
From its loud callings to its mate ;
To let the stars hold their control,
That she in hope may calmly wait.
She would not rest ; her pain is love ;
Her love is a tormenting joy :
Yet for sweet peace to Him above
She would not call, nor this destroy.

“ My heart, my loved one ! longs for thee ;
And I am sad without thy love.
Oh ! come to me, dear !—come to me !
Sweet stars that listen from above,
Tell him, oh ! tell him I must hear,
I must hear, his loving voice !
O Heaven ! canst thou not bring him near ?
Wilt thou not make this heart rejoice ?
O my poor heart ! O Hiel dear !
Canst thou not hear me calling thee ?
Dost thou not know I want thee near ?
Then come to me !—oh, come to me !”

In such outpeakings of her heart
Poor Ruth gave voice to loneliness :
It seemed sometimes she would depart,
And be in soul where he could bless.
But praised be God, whose tender care

Has given us sleep to still our woes ;
That, in oblivion, thus despair
Is drowned without convulsive throes !
From quiet sleep fair Ruth arose
Upon the morrow's happy morn ;
And better than the evening's close
Then seemed the bright day newly born.
The pewee's notes came on the breeze,
And blue-birds sang their cheerful songs ;
The robins chirped 'mong orchard-trees,
Harbingers they of feathered throngs ;
The grasses from their winter sleep
Were wakened by the sun's warm rays ;
And humble vines began to creep
In those delightful spring-time days.

The intermittent April showers
Brought forth fresh hues of deepening green,

And gave new life to coming flowers,
That soon in joy would stud the scene.
The woodpecker's tapping was heard
On hollow, lifeless forest-trees ;
And cooing tones from wooing bird
With music filled the morning breeze.

The trees begin to bud and leaf,
The flowers to blossom by the way,
The crooning maids to lose their grief,
And e'en rejoice in happy May.
The children, more like Nature wild,
Rejoice with laughter-sounding glee ;
And blessed the sight ! as every child
With Nature seems in harmony.
The forest-birds are wild with song,
Each vying with its sweetest notes ;
And from the gay, melodious throng

A perfect wave of music floats :
The robin sings his happy chants,
Whose greatest griefs are chastened joys ;
The brown thrush sweet its love descants,
And all its soul in song employs ;
The wood-thrush, marvellous in song,
High perched on leafing forest-tree,
Its mellow music, clear and strong,
Like richest flute in purity,
Now sounds upon the morning air,
And now, like tones from silver bell,
Among the sweetest bells most rare,
'Tis ringing from the distant dell.
Yea, all the birds in fragrant wild
Are glad in love and beauteous spring ;
For God, All-Father, pleased, has smiled
Upon their loves, and bid them sing
Ruth sallied forth at golden dawn,

As oft in pleasant days gone by,
To roam o'er verdant hill and lawn,
And pluck their offerings joyously.
She found the vernal saxifrage,
Whose graceful form and handsome face,
So pure and bright, the mind engage
With joy, as we its beauty trace ;
The wood-anemone, that hides
Its pleasing beauty from the gaze
Of glaring light, and most abides
Where sunlight seldom brightly plays ;
The cinquefoil, ever-welcome flower,
That first its modest beauty shows,
And tells the love of mighty Power,
That on the humblest care bestows ;
The violet, lovely like the sky,
That seemingly has given it hue,
Which still with heaven would meekly vie

In depth of its celestial blue ;
The dandelion, blest flower and bright,
Embodiment of golden rays,
That, wandering from the source of light,
Were hidden in the early days,
But now come forth to gild the scene,
And make it glorious with their sheen,
Like beautiful gems on garments green,
Nay, nay, like children round a queen,
Whose smiling, happy faces lend
A lustrous beauty sweet to see
To queenly love, and gayly blend
With elegance of royalty ;
The buttercup, itself a king,
That, conscious of its real worth,
Vaunts not its power, nor cares to sing
Its evidence of regal birth ;
And honeysuckle with its sweets

Deep in its yellow-bordered cells,
That e'er the eye with pleasure greets,
And its admiring quickly tells.
With this bouquet of sweet wild-flowers
Ruth sought the height of Stone-house Hill,
Where, during childhood's merry hours,
She oft had come, and sometimes still
Had listened (rapt with simple joy)
To singing birds that round her flew,
And, lighting near, were never coy,
As if the little maid they knew.
Upon Great Rock, whose solid form
Has stood for ages in its might,
Has borne heat, cold, and raging storm,
By summer's day and wintry night,
Ruth rested from her morning quest;
And, tossing carelessly aside
Her broad shade-hat, as welcome guest

She seemed contented to abide.
Then little birds came shyly near
From neighboring oaks and walnuts green,
Bowing their heads, as if to hear
Or see if Ruth themselves had seen.
Fair Ruth was thinking not of birds ;
But pensive, looking toward the fields,
She thought of Hiel's loving words,
And knew the peace that trusting yields.
While unobserved the birds beheld
The maiden lost in happy thought,
Their little spirits each rebelled
Against the stillness of the spot,
Against unrecognized desert ;
As men are modest when addressed,
But oft are anxiously alert
Ere homage due is manifest.
They loudly chirped in sweetest notes

To call attention from the maid ;
They trilled soft music from their throats,
Then flew away to deeper shade.
Yet Ruth their presence noted not ;
Heard not their sweet alarum sound,
Or, hearing, bore it from the spot
To where her mind devotion found.
She fancied (oh, delusion dear
To maidens young, and first in love !)
That he whom most she loved was near,
And to her trust did loyal prove.
It was a dream, and yet a truth.
She saw him not, heard not his voice,
Till from the ringing path, " Ruth, Ruth !"
She gladly heard, and did rejoice.
Then Hiel clambered up the side
Which faces toward the rising sun,
And was with Ruth, who, laughing, cried,

When salutations were begun.

Oh, sweet the bliss of meeting friends

To whom we trust our earthly peace !

Their kiss through all the being sends

A joyous thrill by love's release.

Ruth blushed beneath his ardent gaze,

Yet up to him with trusting eyes

Anon did look, when fond heart-praise

Would from excess of feeling rise.

From her bouquet of fresh spring-flowers

She plucked the violets so blue,

That oft sweet bliss in morning hours

Have given to lovers pure and true ;

And, mindful of their language clear,

To Hiel gave them, who embraced

The happy maiden without fear,

Nor loosed his arms in eager haste.

Descending then the rock of rest,
They wandered westward to the spot
Where first the sight of Hiel blest
Sad, pensive Ruth with 'livened thought.
They lingered long 'mong odorous pines
Which in the spring their perfume shed,
Conversing e'er with love that twines
So blessedly when hearts are wed.
Down by the ruins, lilac-lined,
The lovers roamed ; o'er grass-grown road,
Without the realm by walls confined,
They slowly walked to her abode.

The mother salutation gave
In gentle words, with manner kind,
When he to learn of Ruth did crave,
Ere 'mong the rocks he sought to find.
And now she welcomed him again,

And well was proud of such a guest.
He was the peer of proudest men ;
Upright by all he was confessed.
The father knew young Hiel's worth,
And to his guest gave greeting kind ;
For, though a man of humble birth,
His heart was true, by love refined.
Then passed the bright days pleasantly
'Mid rural scenes, with speech and songs,
And organ's pleasing harmony,
With concord which to love belongs.
They wandered much at setting sun
To see the beauties of the sky,
That oft seems painted by that One
Whose smile is light to worlds on high.
It was at Whitsuntide, when bright
O'er all the landscape, miles around,
There rose before the gladdened sight

Such beauties rare as ne'er abound,
Save Whitsunweek, throughout the year.
'Twas like a garden beautiful,
With terraces afar and near,
Arranged by angels dutiful
To Him, the mighty Artist, — God.
In freshest bloom was every tree
Above the verdant, grass-grown sod,
On sloping fell or level lea :
The blossoms pink and tinted-white
Of apple-trees, with dark-green shade,
Were lovely in the mellow light ;
And where the winter-pear displayed
In sunset glow its petals pure
And white as snow, 'mid leaves of green,
Its tender beauty would allure
All gentle souls to view the scene.
The happy pair, beneath these trees,

All promising abundant yield,
Whose precious perfume on the breeze
Was borne afar o'er hill and field,
Together roamed, and came to meads
On southern side of Stone-house Hill,
Where greenest wold to wood succeeds,
And music sounds from rippling rill.
Rock-maples, oaks, in sunlit green
Assuming hues of lightest gold,
With darkest pines, against the sheen
Of setting sun, did they behold ;
And up on high the heavenly blue,
So clear and cloudless, gave the tone
To every sublunary hue
Of cloud, or tree, or lichen'd stone.
Successive veils of purple tint
Before the sun in splendor hung,
Whose borders beautiful were glint,

And seemed the heavenly lights among ;
And by a cloud of gauze-like blue,
A most effulgent, glorious light —
A marvellous glow — came gleaming through,
And filled the air with radiance bright.
Below, the clouds were tinted red ;
Bright crimson tinged the purple deep ;
While upward, north, the mind was led
To think of mountains high and steep,
Of rugged heights high capped with snow,
Whose purple sides in contrast lay
With leafing forest-trees below,
Made light by some erratic ray.
Then toward the mist-producing sea
Were rolling peaks of lighter hue,
Whose opalescent brilliancy
Rose in relief on deepest blue.
The moon above their rosy heights

Was faintly shining, clear and lone ;
And in the south, soft, mellow lights,
All sun-reflected, gently shone,
Till in the west the crimson red,
The gold, the purple, and the green,
With light the gleaming sunbeams shed,
In glory closed the sunset-scene.
Oh ! tell me not that artists lend
Too brilliant hues to Nature's sky :
No painter can such colors blend
As in a sunset vision lie ;
No poet can describe the light
That darts athwart the waiting clouds,
Nor tell the awe-inspiring sight
When purple robes the light enshrouds.
The air seemed filled with heavenly love,
Which held admiring Ruth in awe :
The whole vast canopy above

Seemed love-absorbed by heaven's law.
Lost from the earth, she looked away
Into the light — far through the light
That others saw — to realms that lay
In heaven, to glories ever bright.
Oh, look away, fair Ruth ! behold
The beauties of the other land.
What seest thou now can ne'er be told :
For human speech 'tis far too grand.
Live, Ruth ! be happy, Ruth ! rejoice !
O maiden ! would I were with thee !
Now thou dost hear an angel-voice :
Thy look betrays it unto me.
Nay, Hiel, seest thou nought in this ?
Hast thou no smile nor gentle word ?
Nay, hush ! 'tis Heaven here ! Such bliss
Must live in silence, is not heard.

Behold, a change ! His face relents,
And tears are welling to his eyes.

O wondrous power ! its rich portents
Are deep and perfect harmonies.

Meet, flash thine eyes, O happy Ruth !
To Hiel's inmost, trembling soul ;
Ay, sweet, thou hast ; and say in truth
What joys upon thy spirit roll.

Your hearts were never quite so near
Before this time, O lovers blest !
You knew not that your love was dear
Till heaven your spirits had caressed.

With happy hearts, yet speaking not,
From power divine which held their minds,
They left the consecrated spot,
Returning where the pathway winds

Below the hill's rough, rocky height,
Through pines and oaks in green arrayed,
And found at dusk of coming night
A place of rest 'neath cottage shade.

Hushed in the twilight soft that holds
O'er thinking minds, and hearts that feel,
An influence sweet, as it infolds
The world, all harshness to conceal,
Sat Ruth, with Hiel by her side,
With father and her mother near,
Enjoying peace that must abide
With confidence in kindred dear.
Then Hiel rose, and full in soul
That will in artist natures oft
The body hold in sure control,
Upon the organ played in soft,
Insinuating tones, that move

Their welcome way to waiting hearts,
Till, in their thralldom born of love,
From clogging earth the mind departs,
Borne on the wings of heavenly sound.
Then when each one in spirit knelt,
Through hidden love, by music found ;
When every string some tone had felt
Vibrating like a keynote bell,—
There issued that which blessed yet wrung
The human harp as none can tell,
Can ever know, save souls among
The heaven-touched few, who catch the tone
By outward ear, as men unblest,
But feel the influence from the throne
Which draws them to that place of rest.
The whole harmonious sunset-scene
Before the eyes of Hiel rose ;
Then quick he passed beyond the screen,

To where the softest zephyr blows,
And harmonies inspired by heaven
Came from the touch of guided hands,
Till to the player there was given
The blessed song of spirit-lands.
Still on he played ; did marvel all
Such tones could from the organ come :
Some mystic power beyond their call
Must yield these sounds so wondersome.
It is the soul of man which lends
A sweetness to the harsh-toned reed ;
By some mysterious power it blends
The notes, and makes them sweet indeed.
Some artists paint their lives away ;
And poets write in their own blood ;
The sculptor moulds in hardened clay
What in his life is true and good ;
And he whom Music counts her own

Will send his great impassioned soul
Out on the full and tender tone
Which from the organ's breast shall roll.

Thus played devoted Hiel then,
His being all absorbed in tune,
His spirit lost to mortal ken,
As in a trance or happy swoon.
Had Ruth but seen the glowing eyes
That looked out upward into light;
Beheld the look of glad surprise
At some new thought, or vision bright,
Which o'er the pale and handsome face
Would sometimes flit, — it might have
been

Her soul had need of richer grace
To witness, pleased, the beauteous scene:
But this was spared; and yet, perchance,

Her virgin love was e'en so great,
That with the first astonished glance
Her heart for joy had been elate.
At length the music ceased to sound
Upon the evening-darkened air ;
And, 'mid the stillness gathered round,
There seemed to rise a voice in prayer.
Each heart did pray to God, the Lord,
For strength and wisdom to be true,
That it might be in sweet accord
With his desire the whole life through.

Then lights were brought ; and, left alone,
The lovers passed an evening hour.
Ruth did not wish her heart of stone,
As once, when, first in Hiel's power,
She deemed the loved one loved her not ;
But happy as the love of man

Can make the maid who claims his thought
(More glad than aught beside it can)
Was Ruth in Hiel's trust that night.
He, too, had need of strengthening love,
Whose sympathies, in tone-delight,
Had issued to the land above ;
And mutual aid the lovers found
To bless and give their spirits health :
For, howsoe'er the truth may sound,
Man's innate strength and worldly wealth
Buoy not his soul in every sea.
Albeit where the dullards float
A perfect man might safely be,
Yet higher waves overturn his boat,
Unless there be some timely aid
To nerve his arm, or guide the helm,
Which hitherto his will obeyed,
Through seas that else would overwhelm.

'Tis sweet a woman's love to share
With all in heaven she holds most dear:
'Tis sweeter far some toil to bear
To give her life one added cheer.

So pondered Hiel in his zeal,
And plans of future living laid
For Ruth's delight and surest weal,
Whose slightest wish should be obeyed.
In autumn days — the hallowed days —
The bridegroom blest would seek his bride,
And 'neath the rich October rays
His happy heart to her confide.
They found a childish happiness
In thoughts of future wedded bliss;
And their delight was none the less
That Reason's tongue was then remiss,
And told them not of sterner life,
Of saddening pains, of fortune ill,

Of tears, perchance domestic strife,
That oft the years of marriage fill.

O long-to-be-remembered eve!

How oft thy hours shall joy afford
Ere comes the day when Ruth shall grieve,
And mourn the loss of one adored!

How oft, sweet Ruth! that good-night kiss
Shall make thy heart beat high with joy,

And thy pure soul possess with bliss,
As thoughts of this thy mind employ!

How shall its fragrant memory cling
Around thy patient, mourning heart,

And 'mid thy grief a solace bring,
To thy sad soul some peace impart!

One last embrace, one more good-night,
(To Ruth it seems a long good-by:)

It is a sad yet pleasant sight.

"Oh, bless thee, Ruth!" does Hiel cry:

"God keep thee, darling! We shall meet

Ere many days have passed away;

And then shall each with loving greet,

Not weaker grown from day to day.

Say, shall we not, my little one?"

But Ruth to him does closer cling;

Nor nearer now than when begun

Do they the hour of parting bring.

"You must not go!" the maiden cries:

"Wait yet until the summer days."

"Nay, nay, my own!" he quick replies:

"Too long I've trod these pleasant ways.

I must away where duty calls,

Nor list the music of thy voice,

Which so my very soul inthralls,

That I were fain no other choice

Were mine, sweet one! than to abide
Henceforth with thee. But, little Ruth,
How serious we have grown to-night!
One now might think, in very truth,
That from thy precious, winsome sight
I were to hide for weary years.
Now look up, little one, and smile:
One kiss must banish all thy fears.
'Tis only for a little while
That we must part. Good-night, good-night!"
And he is gone. 'Twas Ruth did cheer,
And ersttime make the parting light;
But now, alas! she chills with fear.

Can there be aught that through the air
Comes speaking of the ills to be?
And are there natures pure and rare
Which hear or feel the prophecy?

Then came to Ruth the voice so weird,
And to her soul gave warning sound,
That much her heart for Hiel feared
Some sickness dread, or mortal wound.
Within her chamber-walls alone,
Ruth saddened from the mystic sense
That to her spirit, like a tone
Of sudden anguish, sad, intense,
Had quickly come, from reason none
That human sense could truly give;
And with her prayerful soul to One
She called, whose breath could bid him live:
"Oh, sad my heart! some ill portends:
I fear some dire distress is by.
The thought through all my being sends
A shuddering chill. To Heaven I cry:
O Father! keep him from all harm,
And let no ill my love come nigh;

Oh ! hold him by thy strong right arm,
Lest low in sudden grief he lie."

But, while Ruth prayed, there was no faith
To feel her earnest plea was heard ;
And still did speak the warning wraith,
Bidding for strife the maiden gird.

Sweet is the morn in early June
Which wafts upon the cooling air
A melody that is in tune
With all most beautiful and rare
In music made by human tongue :
It is in tune, but so transcends
The songs by gentle mortals sung,
As when the blue of heaven blends
With colors beautiful below,
Its most divine and matchless hue
Is high above the radiant bow, —

A lovely, glorious, gentle blue.
Thy music is a symphony,
O Nature, holy, blest, and pure!
Thy spirit is in harmony
With Him who always shall endure.
And 'tis his voice I think we hear
In thy fair trees, and birds of song:
They bring us to his presence near,
Until for him our spirits long.

It was a peaceful, blessed morn,
When earth to heavenly love is nigh;
When trees and flowers most fair adorn,
But more seem beings from the sky;
When all on earth leads up to God;
When each some word of loving gives;
When e'en the humble, grassy sod
Would bid us know Jehovah lives;

And Ruth, still sad, though peaceful grown,
Roamed through the woodland fresh and green,
And sought a lawn, where, lingering lone,
Her soul might feel the rural scene.
'Twas wood-surrounded ; and a stream
Of limpid water gurgled near,
Whose joyous voice had caught the theme,
And sounded sweetly to the ear.
The sky was like to nought on earth :
'Twas calm and sweet with its own blue :
It seemed that love must have its birth
Somewhere within its godlike hue.
In such a spot, a tree beneath,
Sat Ruth in deep and serious thought ;
But, ever as she mused, would wreath
An influence from the genial spot
That filled with rest her weary soul :
So, waiting through the morning hour,

The blessed God assuaged her dole,
And gave her joy by Nature's power.

Through pleasant days of clover-bloom,
And grasses ripening for the scythe,
Filling the air with fresh perfume,
Making the hearts of farmers blithe ;
And moonlight nights, when odors sweet
On cooling breezes blest with dew
The thinking brow with soothing greet,
Filling the mind with strength anew ;
Throughout the early summer-time,
Until the July ides were nigh,
Till late at night from daylight's prime,—
Ruth held her heart from heavy sigh,
And, hoping, waited for the day
When Hiel haply should appear,
And charm the thoughts of ill away,

With pleasing fact remove her fear.
Successive gentle missives came,
All fraught with love diminished none ;
And oft was coupled Ruth's sweet name
With terms as when the notes begun ;
And soon would he by presence prove
Her foolish fears were all in vain :
"I will thy heart's great weight remove,
And give thee joy for doubting pain."
'Twas thus he sought the maid to cheer ;
And, sooth to say, the letters gave
A freedom then from anxious fear,
And roused her mind from musings grave.
But, when the day was drawing nigh,
A message came of sad import :
His father, then near mountains high,
Whither he went for rural sport,
Was sadly ill ; and he must haste

By evening cars and morning coach,
Nor precious moments lingering waste,
Until the place he should approach.

Ruth's heart misgave her while she read :
But sympathy for Hiel's grief
Her bosom filled, her woe instead ;
And by his pain she found relief.
Yet more, she loved ; for self was nought,
Forgotten in her thought for one
Who was afflicted, being taught,
How sweet the life may be begun,
There needs must be, ere we may die,
Some sad bereavement that shall lead
Our worldly minds to look on high,
Nor rest the soul with earthly meed.
Thus nearer was the maiden brought
To spirit-love, all passion still ;

While in her deepest, purest thought
She prayed that he might yield his will
As Heaven should guide, and better be
For chastisement that came severe,
And, failing not his ways to see,
Be drawn the loving Father near.

The sick man lived through weary days,
And saw the love his children bore,
Who sought to please in gentle ways,
Not less than erst, but haply more.
It was a rich reward for aught
In kindness he had done for them:
It seemed each little gift had brought
A wealth of love, — life's brightest gem.
Oh, blest the thought, when one is gone,
We tried to soothe his aching head;
Or kissed the face, so pale and wan,

That now lies buried with the dead !
'Twas from his summer mountain-home
They bore him to the place of rest :
The angels bore him toward the dome,
Among the mansions of the blest.
His body lay beneath the trees
That grew beside their burial-plot ;
And 'mong their leaves the morning breeze
Sang soft above the sacred spot.

The friend of Hiel came to pay
Respect to him who thus had died ;
And all his sympathies he lay
Before the son so sadly tried.
He did not boldly proffer aid,
(That e'en from friends is oft too rude ;)
But his instinctive love obeyed,
And oped his heart for Hiel's good.
Ofttimes we should submissive lie,

That friends may take what most they need,
And oft the remedies apply
To heal the wounds which, aching, bleed.

Late in the summer's languid days,
Or in the autumn's early hours,
The friend devoted sought to raise
His failing strength by aid of powers
That lie ensconced on mountain-heights
And by the side of cooling streams.
He led him where the woodland sprites
Control the tourist's happy dreams ;
And Hiel there was finding rest,
Save thoughts would come of Ruth away,
And yearnings oft, that would molest
The mountain spirits' perfect sway.

At some lone hour of night, as lay

The friends in sleep on mountain-side,
Sad Hiel, in a piteous way,
And starting in his dreaming, cried,
“They take him, bear him to some land,
Some far-off land, that is unknown!”
When waked the friend at his right hand.
He, half uprising, heard the moan,
And roused the dreamer from his grief.
“Hiel, Hiel! what troubles thee?
Can I not give thy heart relief?
Come, yield thy burden unto me.”
’Twas thus he spake; and Hiel heard.
“It was a dream,” he answered then.
“God bless thee! Not by deed or word
Hast thou forgot (of living men
The dearest far to my sad heart)
To soothe my soul with woe oppressed.
God keep thee! And, if we must part,—

Which much I fear, my mind confessed,—

Remember this, my dearest friend:

Thy love and sympathy I prize

More than the gifts that wealth could send,

So deep enshrined thine image lies.”

Their hands with warmth the young men
pressed,

Revealing more than words could tell;

Yet with the voice each one addressed,

And from their lips true heart-words fell.

Then rested they, and soundly slept

Until the sun shone on the height;

Both by the love of heaven kept,

That watches, sleepless, though the night.

From day to day they roamed the mount,

And came at last to view the spot

Where played the brightly-gleaming fount

Beside their home and burial-plot.

And Hiel, careless then of foot,
Upon a crumbling boulder stept ;
When, as some quickly-running brute,
That, lassoed, stops, by horseman kept,
Is headlong thrown upon the ground,
Sad Hiel fell, and, groaning deep,
There, bruised and bleeding sore, was found
By him who watched him in his sleep.

His blood was stanch'd, and every bruise
Was bathed and dressed with tender care ;
And, had he 'mong the schools to choose,
Had found no one with skill more rare.

His face, unmarred, was perfect still ;
But much was bruised his manly breast ;
Yet there must lie in pain until
Some word to others was addressed.
In shady nook he patient lay,

And thought of Ruth, whose boded grief
Would change to real and dire dismay,
Nor find in aught a sweet relief.

Soon came four men with stretcher rude,
And bore him gently to the vale ;
Yet seemed their hearts with hate imbued,
That on his groans they did regale :
So every rough and stony place
They stumbled o'er with jolting stride,
Or hurried with uneven pace :
To Hiel thus he seemed to ride.

Upon the house deep mourning fell ;
For he was best beloved of all.
Now scarce the father's funeral-bell
Had ceased to sound its mournful call
Ere came this great affliction too :

As if some scourge swept through the air,
And touched the noble and the true
With certain death, that would not spare,
It truly seemed. How shall we know?
Mysterious are the powers of air,
Which quickly come, and swiftly go;
But own we not a Father's care?

Straightway for Ruth was message sent;
When doctors gravely did agree
That Heaven for Hiel's spirit meant
A quick release, from earth set free.
She came, and hastened to his side.
O Heaven, pity, calm her soul!
O Christ, with her her grief divide!
Oh, stay the burdens ere they roll
Upon the maid, destroying sense!
O woe! O misery! O love!

O pain of loving so intense !

Is pity in the Breast above ?

Bending o'er him, she kissed his brow,

As if the form was consecrate ;

That, since the angel made his vow

To yield it to the arms of Fate,

None should approach it, save with awe ;

Should stifle each the human heart,

Obeying not sweet Nature's law

To love in deeds till forced apart.

"Ruth !" whispered Hiel tenderly,

With slight reproach in tone expressed,

Looking with eyes which seemed to see

Within the maiden's beating breast, —

With deep, sad eyes, that looked with love,

Great, longing love, into her eyes.

Then Ruth (with sudden moan), to prove

The yearning strong that pain defies,
In both hands clasped the handsome head,
And on his lips with ardor pressed
A thrilling kiss, as they were wed ;
Then, glad with love, soothed him to rest.
He lay in dreaming, blest with peace ;
And oft a happy smile would light
The gentle face, nor ever cease,
Until, from joy by visions bright,
Some sudden pain aroused his mind :
Then, watching him, would Ruth restore
With deeds and words discreet and kind
To restful peace as felt before.

To Hiel they were happy days,
Despite his pain from deadly wounds :
It was as when the organ plays
Amid the sad chromatic sounds

A gladsome passage, touching sweet,
Bereft of all unseemly mirth,
Wherein tone-spirits seemed to meet,
Receiving blessings not of earth.
So were the moments passing sweet;
While round him friends, and loved one dear,
Were mourning that his laugh would greet
No more the longing, listening ear.
Communion holy was received
With Ruth, his friend, and kindred dear:
On Christ the Saviour he believed,
And looked on death without a fear.
Oh! there was holy love and trust,
Which gave his soul the blessed peace:
His friends were kind, and God was just,
Whose mercies great should never cease.

How eagerly they watch his breath!

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How quickly note his changing face !
How oft they see the hand of Death,
Or deem they hear his steady pace !
Ay, Death has come : his presence chills
The chamber of the waiting one ;
And every heart with sadness fills
That Hiel's life is well-nigh done.
How tenderly they gather round
To catch the softest word he speaks ;
To hear the faintest uttered sound ;
To give the aid, perchance, he seeks !
But he revives : in great amaze
His friends attending hear him plead
That on his last of earthly days
They bear him soft, with goodly speed,
To where the organ mutely stands.
'Tis midnight ; and they softly bear
Him where he would. His slender hands
Quick touch the keys ; the face, yet fair,

Is lifted ; and the eyes, so deep,
Are darker, brighter, than before.
Now hark ! Nay, loved ones, do not weep ;
Think not the voice will sound no more ;
Think not 'tis Death that bids him play
So tenderly, so lovingly,
So trustingly ; nay, loved ones, nay,
He sees the soul of harmony.
Look ! see ! his eyes have heavenly light,
And joys immortal guide his hands :
He is beholding visions bright, —
A morning-view in other lands.
It is no death-wail that he sounds ;
There is no anguish that he feels :
The balm hath healed his painful wounds,
And earth no more his soul conceals.

O happy Hiel ! blessed heart !

His soul is well-nigh free from weights
That hold him from the heavens apart.
It is not kind ; the shining gates
Are open wide for him : release
Your loving hold, and say "Farewell !"
Let now the earthly struggle cease,
And view his soul where pæans swell.
He smiles on thee, poor Ruth, and dies !
Weep now, 'twill ease thine heart, sad one !
But, 'mid thy tears and fond heart-cries,
Remember 'tis his life begun.

O love ! O misery ! O woe !
O loneliness and weariness !
No more can Ruth confiding go,
No more her petty griefs confess.
O love ! die ; yield thy worthless breath,
And leave her scathless, void of pain :

O woe ! O misery ! O death !

Yea, call sweet Ruth ; but words are vain.

The heart from heavy weight of woe

Is lightened oft by crying loud ;

With grievous groans will anguish go,

As from the over-burdened cloud

With thunder comes the falling rain,

Not on the noise of thunder borne,

But from its cause : e'en so will pain

Be lessened if aloud we mourn.

Great grief filled every friendly heart :

But he of Hiel's friends most dear

Far from all others walked apart,

So that his love might not appear ;

For men, if any man they love,

Desire that people may not know ;

But in the blessed world above
Are sexes known as here below?
Two souls may love as beings pure,
Without regard to earthly sense,
Whose loving shall for aye endure;
And heaven shall be their confidence.
Sadly he mourned his friend deceased,
Since by the flesh the thought is known;
For, though their love be much increased,
Yet does the living move alone;
Because, forsooth, he cannot tell
To spirit-listeners what he feels;
And Death alone can break the spell
Which now his tongue in silence seals.

The time of burial is at hand;
And from the church with ivy grown
There issues now a mourning band,

While all with tears their loss bemoan.
Tall maples in the graveyard grow,
Whose leaves bright hues in light assume,
Which o'er the scene a peace bestow
That ill consorts with mental gloom.
Dark firs upon the hillock's side
Contrast their forms with marble shafts
Which mark the end of human pride ;
And o'er their tops the west wind wafts
From crystal lake and hills beyond.
Now round the grave the mourners wait ;
And each with heart sincere and fond
Beholds him last in earthly state.
The old church choir the anthem sing
Which solemn sounds throughout the grove,
And comes to them with notes that ring
Sweet as the voice of sorrowing love ;
Then in the dust the body laid,

According to the service read,
Is comfort given, and prayer made,
While bowed with grief they leave the dead.

Oh ! little comfort came to Ruth,
Whose heart would ne'er neglect to moan :
It seemed the very heavens in truth
Had shut their eyes, and left her lone.
One fond farewell she bade his grave,
That then with leaves was covered o'er ;
And this sweet thought her heart did save
From keener anguish held in store.
She bade farewell to Hiel's grave,
And to his mother's grown with sod,
And to the father's farewell gave,
Whose happy souls were blest with God.
Adieu to all he held most dear,
A sad adieu to weeping friends,

And Ruth, with spirit cold and drear,
Her homeward way in silence wends.

With woman's truest sympathy,
A mother's pity for her own,
Was greeted Ruth, as mournfully
She sought the gentle face alone.
"O mother!" was her wail, "he's dead!
He's gone afar,—so far away!
And this the month we were to wed!
Oh! why should God our loved ones slay,
Why crush our hearts so cruelly,
When it were better for our lives
To give us joy? I cannot see,
It is so dark! My spirit strives
To know the right; but, oh, my heart!
'Tis cruel, mother! Can it be
That God is good our lives to part?
Oh, no, no!—mother, speak to me!"

"My poor afflicted child," she said,
" 'Tis hard this pain to bear, I know ;
Yea, very hard : but you have read
How every thing that comes below
Is overruled by Heaven for good.
God is the Father, and he knows
If there must flow the crimson blood :
His will we never should oppose."

"No, no ! 'tis wrong : something is wrong.
I loved him ; him only did I love :
Of all the living human throng,
He only did my spirit move.
And he is gone ! It is not just :
Heaven is not kind. I am bereft !
Oh, would my body lay in dust !
That living lone I were not left !"

'Twas thus the poor grief-stricken one

In anguish mourned her buried love ;
Complained of Him who this had done,
As though hate ruled the Lord above.
In vain the mother strove to soothe
The troubled mind to calmly wait.
One gentle rain can never smooth
A deep-ploughed furrow, nor abate
A parching drought which chokes the land.
Only the long-continued rains
The furrowed ground cannot withstand ;
They clothe in green the barren plains :
So only by continued love
The wounded heart may e'er be healed,
And learn to trust the Heart above,
Howe'er its will may be revealed.

Throughout the late autumnal days
Ruth mourned with unabated grief,

Complained of God's most cruel ways,
Nor gave her aching heart relief.
November winds made chilling sound,
That filled the mind with musings drear ;
December's cold congealed the ground,
And closed in death the hapless year.
Cold is the air which stately blows
Throughout the freezing winter night ;
Mute is the earth incased in snows
When brightly shines the northern light,
(That chilling light, the iceberg's spark,
Which shoots into the upper air,
Then leaves the earth and heavens dark :)
So cold and mute the maiden fair
Through all the wintry days remained ;
And, like the brilliant northern light,
Her smile by coldness was sustained,—
A meteor flashing in the night.

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But when the air of spring was sent
To melt the ice-king's heart away ;
When balm with morning air was blent,
And warmth made glad the middle day ;
When all the earth looked up in hope,
And glowing skies in love looked down ;
When April donned his vernal cope,
And Nature wore her glorious crown ;
When birds for joy sang pretty songs,
And flowers were bright on every side ;
When all that unto spring belongs
Was in the air afar and wide,—
Then Ruth's cold heart grew warm again,
And claimed the old-time sympathy :
Fast-coming tears relieved her pain,
And set her ice-bound spirit free.

There is a sadness born of grief,

Which oft contains a hallowed peace :
'Tis like the dawning sweet and brief
That comes when darksome night shall cease.
The dawn must come before the day
With brightest glow is ushered in ;
And peace must have its gentle sway
Ere joy its brighter course begin.

Now all the summer scenes remind
The maiden fair of Hiel's love ;
And each remembrance seems to bind
Her closer to the world above.
When one is born, protective bands
Are twined around the infant soul,
Uniting in the Father's hands,
And closer drawn as seasons roll.
The wilful child oft goes astray
Until the tightened cords restrain,

And draw him in the better way
To find relief from chastening pain.
The Lord but gently draws one near,
And giveth joy if he resign:
The bondage groweth daily dear,
The spirit's longings more divine.
So nearer drew the mourning maid,
And found sweet peace in Nature wild:
More beautiful its light and shade
Since she was more the Father's child.
Yet, oh the sudden pangs that came
When some familiar spot was seen
Where Hiel whispered soft her name,
And called fair Ruth his noble queen!
Then sadly would the maiden cry,
And call for him to come again;
Beseeching earth and air and sky
To hear her plea, nor all in vain.

'Twas pitiful, whene'er her heart
Was loosed from wonted calm restraint,
And, wandering from the world apart,
She made to Heaven her wild complaint.
She longed for music that he gave
As none had ever played before:
She hungered sadly; but the grave
Will never yield its hoarded store.
And oft her soul in prayerful mood,
Forgetting, called for blessings great
To rest on him so true and good:
Then, quickly thinking of his fate,
She would with moans bewail her loss,
Until the wounds afresh would bleed;
And through the night would sleepless toss,
Until her mind was tired indeed.
But, ever then as morning came
With gentle breezes from above,

It seemed an angel spoke her name,
And healed her heart with heavenly love:
Then roaming through the summer morn,
Amid the oak and maple trees,
Her heart no longer seemed forlorn,
But deemed a spirit spoke in these,
And whispered of the far-away,
The blessed land where pain is not;
Where gentle music holds its sway,
And fills with joy the coming thought;
Where, blest, no more her life would long,
Unsatisfied, for music sweet,
But every soul would dwell in song,
And all in harmony would meet.

As summer passed, the rising sun
Received new beauty in her eyes;
And often, as the day was done,

A tender brightness filled the skies.
A sweeter glory tinged the west
Than erst when Ruth with Hiel gazed ;
A richer crimson did invest
The outer clouds, as barriers raised
To guard the hallowed cloud of gold,
Which bordered still a gentle hue,
That seemed a sweetness to infold,
Which from beyond came shining through.
And oft a blue cloud-height appeared,
As if some mountain's soul had strayed
From Lethe's banks, and thus had reared
A mountain-peak of vapor made.

The nights of June were glorious nights ;
And oft the soul came nearer heaven
Through evening's clare-obscure delights,
By power of gentle moonlight given.

The night was calm as ocean's face
When rippling waves are hushed in peace:
So still the silence-haunted place,
As when the sounds of music cease
In chapel or in church of God.
A gentle voice had then been heard
O'er hills and verdant pastures broad;
But nought save song of dreaming bird
Disturbed the silent midnight air.
The sky was clear and darkly blue,
And seemed the thoughtful eye, most fair,
Of some great soul devout and true.
The twinkling stars seemed gleamings bright
From that pure life whose eye was seen.
On high the moon illumed the night;
And full its weird, resplendent sheen
O'er all unhidden forms below
With grace and soft enchantment fell:

Its magic influence who can know,
Or e'er its pensive promptings tell?
The air was filled with odors sweet,
Distilled from flowers and new-mown hay
By holy tears that shining greet
The pilgrim on his midnight way.
'Twas on this night, so blest on earth,
That Ruth, devoted, sought the shrine
Of much held sacred since her birth,
Amid the rocks and clinging vine.
Lightly the maiden found the height,
O'er pathway steep, with spindles soft,
Oft startled in the weird moonlight
By moving bush or pine aloft;
Or by some shadow, spirit-like,
That on her sharpened sight appeared,
And to her woman's heart did strike
A sudden awe, though nought she feared.

At last, where high the tower stands
Which overlooketh forests wide,
Cool streams and flowering meadow-lands,
The maiden came with none beside.
Now list her words as she recounts
The glorious visions of that night,
And see how faith in earnest mounts
To regions of supreme delight:—
“Upon the tower I lingering stood,
Beholding beauty in the sky,
In darkness of the deep pine-wood,
In rocks and fields that 'neath it lie.
I saw His beauty everywhere,
The glorious creatures of His hand,
With heavenly splendor, bright and fair,
Afar extending o'er the land.
Alone I sat 'mid rocks and trees,
With glory 'neath and overhead;

While not a whisper on the breeze
Came thitherward by fairies led.

Blest company ! As when some tried
And trusty friends in love are met,
And silently their hearts confide,

d/ With meaning more and deeper yet
Than words can tell : so then it seemed
My happy heart with them was one ;
That all o'er which the moonbeams gleamed
Were happy with a heaven begun.
And, as I looked, joy burdened me ;
But I forgot the scenes of earth,
Beholding earth, and seemed to be
Among the lands where song had birth.
'Twas sweet and beautiful ; 'twas heaven.
There Hiel came and welcomed me ;
And, when our hearts had greeting given,
He led me where mine eyes could see

The blessed Lord of that fair land.
O joy and thankfulness of heart !
He gently took me by the hand,
And kindly said, 'From him apart
You never more must weeping go.
Live, and enjoy these fertile fields,
The spreading trees ; and I bestow
On you whate'er this kingdom yields.'
It was the same beloved face
I saw erstwhile in visions bright :
There was the same abounding grace,
The deep blue eyes, and glorious light,
Which filled my soul with love before,
He bowed his head, the loving Lord ;
And, oh, my heart ! I did adore.
I could not cry, nor lisp a word,
But round his neck mine arms I threw,
And I kissed him ; I had no fear :

He answered me, and then I knew
Why all esteemed the Lord so dear.
It is this full heart-sympathy
He gives, and is not loath to give,
That makes us long his face to see,
And with the Christ to ever live.
I saw that Hiel grew to be
More like the Lord, with whom he dwelt ;
And, what was strange, he seemed to me
None other man than when we knelt
Upon the earth so long ago :
He was the same, yet like Him more ;
But, as we talked, I came to know,
And then to see, what was in store
For those who find this happy land.
The Lord was infinite in soul,
As in the strength of his right hand.
New beauties would to all unfold :

Beholding them, we should be made
Like unto Him whom we behold,
With beauty that would never fade.
Then through the groves we slowly walked,
And saw the maples, oaks, and pines ;
And listened we, as Christ he talked
Of beauteous trees and fruitful vines.
He touched the trees, and music sweet
Was heard throughout the heavenly grove ;
He touched the vines, and at his feet
The flowers bright, which gently wove
Into the stronger harmony
Soft, tender tones, that filled the chords
With sweetness which before had been
Strong and grand : such power was the Lord's.

“The harmony was richer there
Than aught I heard upon the earth :

It seemed that what we call so rare

Has but a shadow of its worth.

The music grand, the beauteous scene,

My soul with unknown feelings thrilled ;

And, looking up to that blest face,

My mind with curious questions filled.

‘How do these trees give forth sweet sounds,

While those on earth are silent made ?

And why are these delightful grounds

More blest than those beneath their shade ?’

‘These are the souls of trees,’ he said,

‘With bodies they can gladly use :

They are the spirits of the dead,

Which through these grounds such sounds dif-

fuse ;

While on the earth their souls were pent

In forms unyielding and opaque,

Which for man’s good were freely lent,

As all below are for his sake.

Have you not felt, when 'mong the trees,

An influence that seemed divine?

Did there not come upon the breeze

Sweet sounds from oak or forest pine?'

I answered, 'Yes, among my own

Beloved trees, to childhood dear,

There oft has come a solemn tone,

As if the Lord himself were near.'

'All kindred spirits are in tune,

Where'er their bodies chance to be;

And man may count his greatest boon

This power of God-given sympathy.

Whene'er these trees in heaven sound,

The trees below, of kindred tone,

Will vibrate, till the earth around

May feel the power of music's zone.

The man whose soul is filled with song,

Whose life is poetry indeed,
Is felt among the human throng,
Though he neglect the sounding reed.
So influence of trees and flowers
Are potent, though the voice be still;
And daily man, through happy hours,
Should seek their charm from worldly ill.
While still I looked, a numerous throng
Came onward through the open grove,
With one accord broke forth in song,—
The song of Christ's abounding love:—
'The Wonderful! the Mighty God!
The Counsellor! the Prince of Peace!'
They grandly sang; and far abroad
The multitude would never cease.
It seemed 'Messiah' that they sang,
(What song could better tell their hearts?)
And through the grove their voices rang

With all their rich, melodious parts.
All nature played the 'Symphony,'
With harmonies as pure and deep
As God himself could bid them be,
Who doth the life of music keep.
Meanwhile, mine eyes on Hiel gazed,
And saw his soul with joy expand;
And as I pondered, much amazed,
He joined with tune the happy band.
But suddenly the vision sped,
And left me lone upon the height.
Oh! I had been to heaven led
From rock-bound tower that moonlight night."

Then thoughtfully Ruth sought the vale
By winding paths with rough rocks bound,
And in the still and moonlit dale
Sweet rest in dreamless slumbers found.

Thus Ruth was happy in her faith,
Which beauteous Nature rendered strong.
Nor was her hope a phantom wraith,
Which may to nervous minds belong :
Her triumph through affliction came,
By ministers of God approved,
Which e'er his loving heart proclaim,
Nor ever from their course are moved.
Her life became a blessing great
To all who heard her gentle voice :
Her loving words would grief abate,
Or make their troubled hearts rejoice.

As shines the bright-leaved maple-tree
When autumn lends it tender hue,
And morning sun its purity
Beholds from skies of richest blue :

So shines the trusting face of Ruth,
Whom chastisements have purified ;
Who sees the light of heaven forsooth,
And in its smile will e'er abide.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

IN THE FOREST.

I AM roaming through the forest,
O'er the pine-leaf covered ground ;
And I hear the deep-toned music
Of the living pines resound.

Fair the canopy above me
Of the branches interwrought,
In their rustic beauty woven
By the genie of the spot.

Not a sound disturbs the music
But the flying of a bird,
As, above, the pine-tree murmurings
In their thoughtfulness are heard.

And the stately forms in beauty,
In their rugged beauty, rise,
Towering darkly all around me
Toward the prayer-inviting skies.

Far above the woven branches
Linger clouds of lightest hue ;
Far above the snow-white vapor
Is the love-compelling blue.

Here I come in autumn, listening
To the murmurings of the pines ;
And a blessed, heavenly influence
Round my waiting soul intwines.

All the trees seem angel spirits,
Bringing music from above ;
While my heart is glad in worship,
And I know that One is love.

Yea, 'tis joy to roam the forest ;
For its depths are filled with good ;
And our God he is the Genie
Of the sweetly-scented wood.

OUTBURSTS.

AN IMPROVISATION.

INSCRIBED TO PROF. HAUPT, BERLIN, GERMANY.

'Tis Sunday in the city blest
Of Prussia's honored king ;
And to the church the pious folk
Their offerings freely bring :
It is a pleasing evidence
That true believers know
The mighty God looks kindly down
On all who dwell below.

With genuflections and response,
Which speak devoted hearts,
The multitude implore the aid
That only God imparts ;
And, through the glad and solemn hour
Of litany and song,
A sacred presence deigns to bless
The humbly waiting throng.

But list, ye patient, longing souls,
Who catch ethereal sounds :
The air of morning now with more
Than wonted grace abounds :
Some inspiration from the great,
The pure, eternal Soul,
Hath blessed his life who nobly holds
The organ in control.

As when a winding river runs,
 Sky-tinted, through the meads,
Its beauty and transparency
 Entice us where it leads ;
So now a simple harmony,
 Serene, and wondrous sweet,
Allures us through delightful scenes
 Where heavenly beauties meet.

But ever, as it onward flows,
 A mighty, perfect tone,
It seemeth more the favored man
 Speaks not himself alone :
There lieth still great power beyond,
 A depth of soul unfound,
From which outpour the grandest chords,—
 All harmony unbound !

Ay, weep and smile, ye listening ones,

Before such presence kneel,

(Unless a fiery passion burns,)

So much of joy you feel.

It is his soul's glad jubilee,

Set free from earthly bands ;

And in his flight he beareth us

Afar to spirit-lands.

Ah! fate of man in mortal mould,

The greatest bliss must end ;

And never till our heaven is gained

Can tones forever blend.

The wondrous chords have ceased to sound,

And silence is supreme :

So quick the change to earth again,

It seemeth like a dream.

ORGAN-TONES.

INSCRIBED TO H. CLARENCE EDDY, ORGANIST.

(1870.)

ENCLOSED by many mountains round,

A rustic village quaintly lies,

Whose native music is the sound

Of dark Winooski's melodies.

'Mid happy homes its churches stand,

With comely forms and lofty spires,

Whose gilded vanes in light expand,

In sunshine glow like beacon-fires.

When autumn came with sheaves of corn,

And leaves of trees with tinting rare,

And cherished rest at sabbath morn,

With thoughtful stillness in the air ;

With thankful heart to worship Him
Who careth well for pilgrims lone,
I sat me down where sunlight dim
On frescoed walls in softness shone.

When coming steps had ceased to sound
Throughout the aisles of choir and nave,
My beating heart gave sudden bound,
Like vessel struck by dashing wave.

The organ-tones by master-hand
Were storming soft and hardened hearts ;
And, like a weird magician's wand,
Laid his heart bare in hidden parts.

Then came the care of Providence ;
And these the thoughts he grandly played :
"God is a castle and defence
When troubles and distress invade."

We saw the castle strong descend ;
We entered in for refuge there ;
We heard the storms with fierceness rend
The weaker castles of the air.

“God is a refuge and defence
When troubles and distress invade :”
Our eyes beheld Omnipotence ;
Our hearts before him humbly laid.

Hushed were the tones, and calm arose
The earnest preacher's voice in prayer ;
While heart of mine : “From all his foes
Preserve this genius everywhere.”

TWO ROSES.

WHEN winter winds were blowing
 Upon the northern host,
And storms severe were snowing
 Along the eastern coast,
There came a courier, bringing
 Away from southern lands,
Where merry birds were singing,
 A gift from pretty hands.

May roses, I remember,
 She found in open air,
That, in the late December,
 Were blooming bright and fair:
May roses sweet, that linger
 Full oft to summer-time,
She plucked with dainty finger
 For me in frozen clime.

One bloomed in tender beauty,
To show the trust sustained :
The other rose was duty,
That for my life remained :
It was a budding flower,
With hope enshrined therein,
And symbolized the power
Of him who strives to win.

'Tween hallowed leaves I pressed them,
To save them from decay ;
And oft my heart hath blessed them
Since that eventful day.
When earthly scenes around me
Have nought of cheer to give,
And with their wiles confound me
Till I disdain to live,

I bless the sweet confiding
The full-blown rose displays,
And hear the gentle chiding
For my unworthy ways ;
While hope revives, inspiring,
Till I again begin,
And striving, never tiring,
The prize essay to win.





